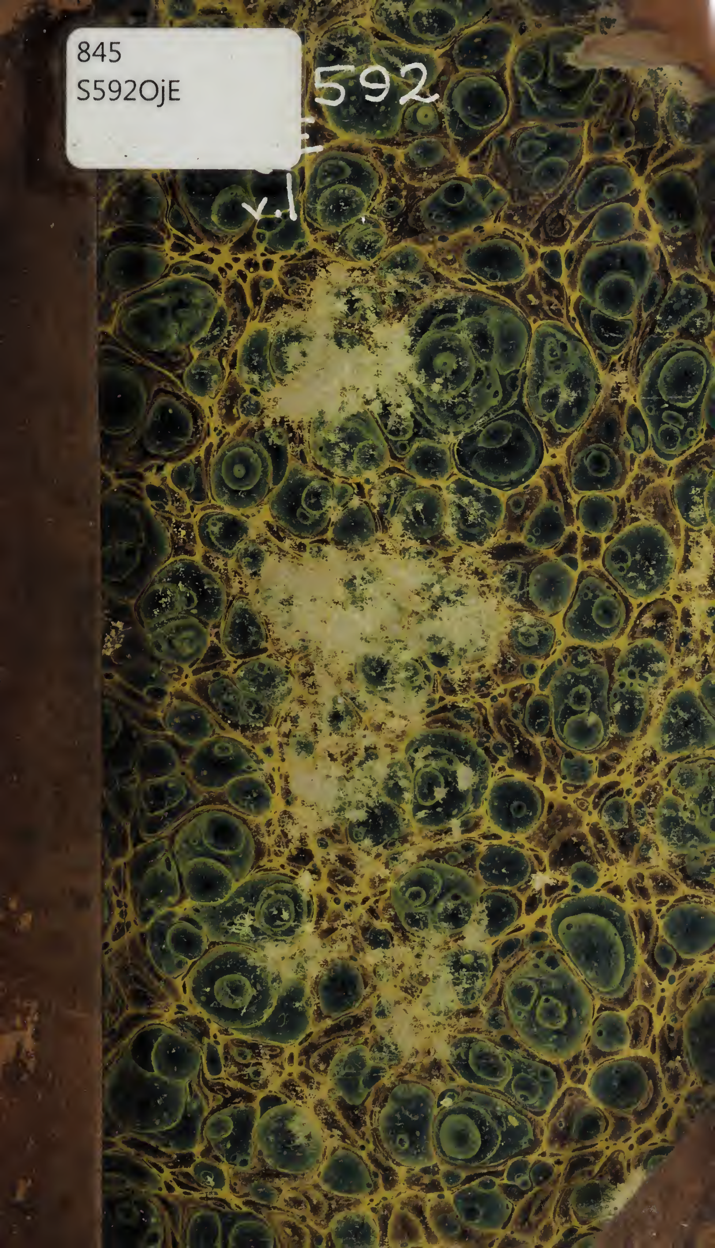
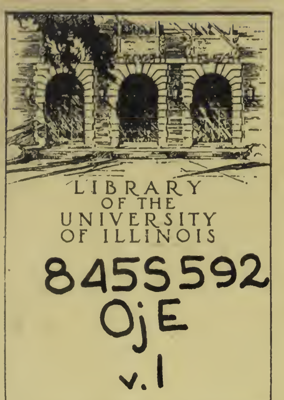


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Sir Benjamin Morris.

Waterford.

JULIA SEVERA;

OR THE

Year Four Hundred and Ninety-two;

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

J. C. L. SIMONDE DE SISMONDI,

AUTHOR OF NEW PRINCIPLES OF POLITICAL ECONOMY; THE HISTORY OF FRANCE, THE ITALIAN REPUBLICS OF THE MIDDLE AGE, THE LITERATURE OF THE SOUTH OF EUROPE, &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON,

PRINTED FOR G. AND W. B. WHITTAKER, AVE-MARIA-LANE; AND MUNDAY AND SLATTER, HIGH-STREET, OXFORD.

1822.

ADVERTISEMENT.

IN giving an English dress to the novel of M. SIMONDE DE SISMONDI, the translator has endeavoured to render accurately the author's meaning, without avoiding, through idle ignorance, apparent difficulties; or, through an affectation of elegance, foisting in ideas that do not exist in the original. It must, however, be observed that, from the gross typographical errors which disgrace the French work, many of the paragraphs are rendered nearly unintelligible, a circumstance much be-

wailed, and in some measure accounted for by the author, in a note prefixed to a long list of the most formidable errata.

Oxford, April 16*th*, 1822.

PREFACE.

IT is with considerable diffidence I lay before the public a work which can fulfil the object I had in view when I composed it, so far only as the author may unite in himself talents to which I cannot pretend, talents which, at my age, after a life spent in serious study, are rarely preserved. It is a novel, and I could wish it were fully entitled to that name, by the accuracy and interest of the pictures of domestic life it professes to draw. Interest, however, can with difficulty be carried back thirteen centuries; when placed at a period so imperfectly known, the pictures of common life must ever be wanting either

in truth or in animation; characters are lost in the shade, when, instead of developing their sentiments, the writer seeks to describe places, times, and public manners.

It must be observed that these inconveniences are attached to the object I had in view, namely, to describe the state of nations, the relation between the inhabitants, the ruling opinions and domestic habits of Gaul, at the different periods of its history. Endeavouring, in a work of a more serious nature, to shew in a clearer light than hitherto has been done, the concatenation of public events, the great historical personages, the victories and the disasters, the virtues and crimes of the various races and kings of France; I should like, at every great revolution to give to my readers an image of private life also, painted on an imaginary can-

vass, filled by fictitious portraits, still guided, however, by historical research, and following the cotemporary writers with scrupulous nicety in my sketches of opinions and of national characters.

The novel which I now present to the public is intended to describe the state of Gaul at the time of the invasion of Clovis. It is the fruit of the researches and labours which I consecrated to the compiling of the early volumes of the History of France. The historian is, as it were, obliged to live in the age he describes; such continued labour cannot be expected in the mere novelist. Had I been actuated by no other motive than that of writing the year FOUR HUNDRED AND NINETY-TWO, I should certainly not have taken the trouble of reading Gregory of Tours three successive times; neither should I have worn myself

pale, poring over all the codes of laws, over all the chronicles, over all the Lives of the Saints of that period. The historian is the only person who has the opportunity of acquiring such a knowledge of ancient times, as can enable him to place the scene of a novel at an early date, with strict attention to the manners of the age. Those manners and opinions, such as I have represented them, a candid antiquary must acknowledge to have belonged to that period. In my portraits of characters I disclaim all intention of painting in odious colours one order of society rather than another; of exalting or debasing any system of religion or politics. I wish to describe the ancient state of society such as it was, at least such as we must conceive it was, with all its virtues and vices. I do not require the reader to deduce any certain con-

clusions from that state, I seek only to present it to his view.

The mottoes I have prefixed to each chapter, after the example of the author of those admirable Scotch novels, to which I could wish mine were more nearly assimilated, are all extracted from cotemporary authors; these are intended to show how far the imaginary scenes I have presented agree with the real events of that age.

The principal characters of the novel, Felix, Julia, and Severus, are entirely fictitious; the action of Volusianus, on which the whole plot, as it were, hinges, and the expedition of Theodoric, are also imaginary. They are things that may have happened, but we are not certain they actually did. The other public events are, for the most part, grounded on history. I am not aware of having deviated from

chronological order, excepting so far as regards St. Senoch, whose retirement to the tower of Loches was, perhaps, half a century posterior to the period in which I have supposed it to take place.

JULIA SEVERA;

OR THE

Year Four Hundred and Ninety-two.

CHAP. I.

THE FAMILY ESTATE OF A SENATOR OF GAUL AT THE END OF THE FIFTH CENTURY.

"And he gave him, in this very forest, land twelve leagues "in breadth, and as many in length, promising that neither "he nor any of his successors should ever dispute his right "to its possession."—*Vita Sancti Sigeberti, Austrasiæ Regis, cap.* v. *p.* 601.

UNDER the consulship of Anastasius and Rufus, in the year of Rome 1245, or of the Christian era 492, Felix Florentius, a rich lord of Gaul, returning from a journey to Constantinople, came to take possession of a vast estate which the virtuous Emperor Majorian, his mother's uncle, had presented to his family during

his short but glorious reign. The estate of a private individual, in those days, extended over a whole province, and that of Felix Florentius, situate on the left border of the Loire, between that river and the Cher, comprised a large tract of fertile land; but its ancient population had wholly disappeared: its inhabitants had all perished, either through misery, the consequence of universal oppression, or by the sword of the barbarians. Majorian, in giving this desert district to his relation Sylvia Numantia, Felix's mother, had insisted that she should re-people it with cultivators.

The house, abandoned by one of its former possessors, had been, by Sylvia's orders, repaired and enlarged in order that it might become the residence of new masters; this mansion was erected on a height which commanded a view of the windings of the Loire. The Vandals in their last inroad had set fire to it, but the progress of the flames had been stopped ere they had done much mischief, and all marks of the destructive element had been carefully removed. Her house, or villa, known in the country by the name of Noviliacum, and which in these days we should call a castle, was very roomy and convenient: as yet private individuals had not directed their attention to the fortification

of their dwellings. The walls of this mansion were not flanked by towers. They were of moderate thickness, and the flat roofs which covered not only the principal habitation, but also the humble dwellings destined for the slaves, were not fortified with battlements. Although of small extent, they were open to those who chose to walk on them, and they commanded the most rich and varied landscapes. The distribution and decoration of the apartments had been directed by the best artists of Greece and Rome: indeed so much taste was displayed that Noviliacum might be deemed an edifice worthy of the Augustan age; whereas for many miles around not a single habitation was to be found that did not bear the marks of the ravages of the Vandals, the Suevi, the Silingi, or the Huns.

The enchanting gardens, the parks, and the orchards of Noviliacum, were once more enriched by the toil of man; the fruit-trees, which for ten long years had seen their fruits wither and drop unprofitably from their branches, without a living hand to pluck them, recovered a new vigour when they received from the gardeners of Sylvia the cultivation which had for so long a time been suspended; young plantations were added to the old ones, to perfect the plans of the original holder. Still in wandering

over these gardens one could not help observing that the generations of plants, like those of men, had been interrupted. All the trees which require culture, were either of ancient date or newly planted, for the proprietor had not for a long time paid any attention to the estate. Even before his final ruin, he had for many years pined in misery, surrounded by the riches of nature; he had long destroyed the work of his forefathers without the power of repairing any part of it; and it was not until he had suffered much and caused much to be suffered, that he perished under the weight of calamities which the folly and the vices of the Emperors inflicted upon Gaul.

On quitting the gardens of Noviliacum, nature in all her wildness was seen to resume her empire over the fields which in days of yore had been enriched by the industry of man. Forests had invaded all the heights; they extended from the mountains athwart slopes which in happier times had been covered with fertile vineyards. The lowest plains which, when the Gauls enjoyed the blessings of peace and opulence, had been carefully levelled and converted into rich meads, irrigated by far-fetched waters, were now covered with rushes, fostered in stagnant marshes. In the more elevated plains, the

marks of the ploughshare were yet to be seen; but now the heaths and brushwood displayed in turns their red and yellow blossoms, while among the brambles some flocks grazed the scanty herbage which had taken the place of the former luxuriant harvests.

Sylvia, however, had fulfilled the conditions to which the illustrious Majorian had attached the possession of this vast territory; she had endeavoured to repeople these wilds, and to furnish the means of livelihood to the industrious inhabitants that she introduced. But the whole country, known then by the name of *Interamnes*, which spread from the Loire to the Cher, from the solitudes of Sologne to the environs of Tours, was comprised in her estate. This small province extended from north to south four or five leagues, and eight or ten from east to west: in the days when Gaul was free it had been known to array more than six thousand soldiers; yet all the efforts of one of the richest families in the empire had hardly been able to bring back six hundred families of cultivators. To repeople this territory Sylvia had disposed of her possessions scattered over Gaul. She had sold a palace which she possessed in Arles; she had taken from the hands of the merchants the funds which they employed for her at

Treves: these two capitals, one the metropolis of the seventeen provinces, the other of the prefecture of the Gauls, were the two cities of the west which still possessed the most money; but in these times of universal distress, Sylvia could not realize her fortune without making enormous sacrifices.

In consequence of this distress new cultivators were easily procured for the land; they were then to be bought in the mart as we now buy cattle, and it was from the Visigoths, lords of Aquitaine at this time, that she purchased three hundred slaves. Many of them were unfortunate Gauls, who having been forced from their hearths by the barbarians, returned to dig anew with enshackled hands, the soil of their native country. Sylvia, more humane and at the same time more prudent than most of the Roman proprietors of land, had replaced all those of her captives who were of Gaulish race, nearly in the condition of their ancestors; she destined them to cultivate lands, the crops of which she divided with them.

Others of her slaves were Germans, captured in warfare. The Visigoths and the Vandals, the Franks, the Germans, and the Burgundians, had more than once turned their arms against each other: after their combats the Roman slave-

merchants were wont to purchase the captives whom they had permitted to live, in order to sell them to the holders of land; but these captives, contemning the Romans, whom they were forced to obey, shuddered at serving where their companions in arms commanded as masters; they ever sought the means of escape, they threatened, they yielded to bursts of fury, and were restrained only by the fear of suffering the most cruel punishment, by manacles which they constantly wore, or by dungeons, named *Ergastula*, in which they were immured every evening.

Sylvia had also procured slaves of Scythian race, who forty years before had, following Attila, overrun Gaul. These, incapable of submitting to rural toils, had recommenced in the wilds of Sologne the wandering life to which they were accustomed in the deserts of Northern Asia. To them Sylvia entrusted the care of her numerous flocks; they followed them on horseback amid the forests, armed with lances; with equal courage they defended them against wolves and robbers; twice each year they returned a faithful account of their charge; and as they never entered a house, nor tasted the sweets of civilized life, having as it were no communion

with man, they fancied themselves still free, and were happy in their servitude.

Certain oppressive laws were enforced which did not allow the landholder who treated his peasants with humanity, to receive on his estates the fugitives who, crushed by the cruelty of their masters, or harassed by the severity of the fiscal officer, (*villicus*) wished to abandon their cabins, their fields, all their little property, to rescue at least their persons from torture. According to a law of Honorius, the husbandmen who, however, were not slaves, might be reclaimed by their first masters, and without the formalities of justice might be forced from those who sheltered them. Sylvia, nevertheless, had taken advantage of the universal anarchy to receive a large number of wandering families, who, without her assistance, must have perished in the forests. These were ancient Gauls, who spake the Celtic tongue; they wore long straight hair, sleeved tunics, and wide trowsers, a dress used even in the time of Cæsar. They were patient, industrious, faithful: but four ages of oppression had destroyed that energy and vigour of mind which their forefathers possessed; nay, the very recollection even of their former liberty.

Lastly, two small military colonies completed

Sylvia's establishment in the district of *Interamnes*, and they watched for the safety of the whole territory. These consisted of veterans to whom the latter emperors had promised lands; but to whom no money had been given to build houses, or enable them to obtain herds of cattle and instruments of tilth, without which this pretended generosity of princes was entirely useless. But the senator Fulvius Florentius, the father of Felix, had supplied what the state could not give. He established a *maniple*, or a company of aged soldiers, at the pass of the Loire, and another at the frith of the Cher.

The first of these companies was composed of ancient legionaries, enrolled in the various provinces of the Roman empire. Therein were seen united, Italians, Greeks, Illyrians, Moors, and Britons, who, having for a long time fought under the same banners, knew no country but their camp. Their wives, who had followed them to the army, like them were hardened to toil, and fearless of danger. Fast approaching towards old age, having no longer vigour to support the hardships of warfare, they had hoped yet to bear the toils of agriculture; in truth their arms had not lost their strength, and when they began some new work, they were enabled by their ardour to leave far behind

them the peasants who shared the task. But neither was perseverance nor patience to be reckoned amongst the virtues to which the soldier's life had formed them. Their village was known by the name of the legionaries' camp; its houses were larger, more convenient and tasty than those of the other cultivators; but when the spectator approached them, he might quickly discover many marks of the indolence and negligence of the inmates.

Five or six leagues distant the senator Florentius had built on the margin of the Cher, the camp of the federates. Federate was a name given in the latter years of the empire to the barbarians who, without abandoning their language, their arms, or their native leaders, served under the Roman eagles. In their ranks were seen Ostrogoths and Visigoths, Burgundians, Franks and Vandals: they had almost all borne arms against the empire ere they enlisted in the pay of the emperors. They had successively crowned and afterwards dethroned many of the later monarchs of the west. They had finally given the crown of Italy to Odoacer, and in return had exacted from him ample gifts of land. Wherever these veteran barbarians had settled to enjoy repose, they wished in their adopted country to retrace an image of the forests of

Germany, whence they originally sprang. Never were their houses contiguous; no bar, no wall, forbade approach; towns and forts appeared to the Germans so many prisons, which, without renouncing liberty, they could not inhabit. For this reason the senator Florentius, who wished to give his military colonies some means of defence, although he fortified the camp of the legionaries, contented himself with placing that of the federates on a rugged spot which owed its strength to nature alone.

Sylvia Numantia had by long labour, perseverance, and prudence, created these various settlements which in this desert province seemed a new colony. Her husband and her son had been enabled to sojourn on this estate only at short and distant intervals. The former, the senator Fulvius Florentius, had been called to Rome at the commencement of Majorian's reign. This virtuous Emperor, who with justice might be called the last of the Romans, employed by turns Florentius in the cabinet and in the field; the cause of his country was to him a sacred cause; and after he was assassinated, Florentius continued to defend Roman independence, never ceasing to bear arms for Rome, reckless of the monarch in whose name the orders were given. Eighteen years had now elapsed since he fol-

lowed the Emperor Julius Nepos into Dalmatia, when, foreseeing the fall of the empire, which happened two years after, he sent into Gaul his wife, and his only son, then eight years of age, while he hastened to Constantinople to entreat the Emperor Zeno to undertake the defence of the west.

A grammarian and a priest had been chosen by the senator Florentius to accompany Sylvia in her retirement on the banks of the Loire, and to tend with her the education of the son who had been born to them in an advanced age, and on whom were grounded the hopes of the family. The senator followed the example of all great families in taking such masters to initiate his son in the study of sacred and profane literature; but he made Sylvia promise that she would not leave to them the care of finishing his education.

He recommended her to take at an early age his child Felix to some large town. "It is "communion with his equals," said he to her, "that forms man, and from Orleans to Tours "Felix would see none but inferiors or artful "slaves. Where at Noviliacum would be the "man that durst look him face to face, who "would venture to support an opinion differing "from his, who would oppose him, or hint a doubt

" of his talents and importance? Would " he there need the art of persuasion, where " all must obey his nod? Would he find " it necessary to act properly when no one " would have the courage to prove him in the " wrong? Well I know the vices and corrup- " tion of cities; but can they be compared to " the corruption that slavery engenders? I know " that he must find in capitals intriguers, para- " sites, ready to favour his evil inclinations; " women divested of modesty, who will offer to " him all the temptations of vice; but will he " not find flatterers, intriguers, women prone to " seduce, if he be surrounded with slaves only? " Nay, will there be found one who shall not " watch in his youthful master the first mark of " a sensual propensity to change it to a passion? " the first trace of intellectual weakness to turn " it to a vice? Are we not in the bosom of our " families surrounded by as many seducers, as " many corrupters of innocence, even as the " effeminate princes of Asia? Would not a " youthful master educated to virtue amidst " slaves, be a phenomenon as wondrous as the " son of a despot possessed of a pure heart and " a feeling soul? Miserable wretches are we, " miserable are the times in which we live, when " a free population has disappeared from the

" face of the earth! Hapless are our days, " when the lord of Noviliacum must travel ten " long leagues ere he meet his equal! These " are the evils which shake the Roman empire— " not the discord between Glycerius and Ne- " pos;—not the arrogant ambition of the pa- " trician Orestes;—no, it is because true Italians " are no longer found in Italy, nor true Gauls " in Gaul, that our armies can no longer de- " fend us, and that the federates read us the " law."

Following these injunctions, Sylvia, as soon as Felix had completed his thirteenth year, took him from Noviliacum, which until then she had inhabited alternately with the neighbouring towns of Tours and Orleans, to Arles, regarded as the capital of Roman Gaul even after the fall of the empire of the west, and where many of the greatest lords of the province assembled. In the society of the Roman nobles he was to learn elegance of manners and the politeness that becomes a public character. By the example of many of these lords he might also learn politics and eloquence; but a taste for the arts of war, as well as for those acquirements of the body and mind which belong to a more active life, could not be gained in such a society. Sylvia, therefore, as soon as her son could grasp

the sword, wished him to acquire among the barbarians, that consciousness of dignity and vigour, which an effeminate education had destroyed amongst the juvenile Romans. She presented him to Uric, king of the Visigoths, whose residence was at Toulouse; she next presented him to Gondebaud, king of the Burgundians, whose capital was Vienne in Dauphiné.

The Romans contemned and hated the barbarians; but they feared them: the senators of Gaul, (and this name was given to all who by their patronage and their riches might have been worthy to enter the senate of the last emperors,) thought themselves at least the equals of the kings of those conquering tribes, whom they had often seen to accept with eagerness the Roman honours; they did not even lose the hope of being one day their commanders, when the eagle of the empire, which in their opinion now slumbered only, would once more unfold his pinions. But better than any courtiers did they know the submission due to superior strength; four centuries of thraldom had developed in them all the arts of flattery, and the most haughty of the Gauls could crouch, cringe, and fawn before those fierce conquerers, not one of whom was untinged with the blood of his brothers or nearest relatives.

Felix Florentius was not endowed with this supple character when he presented himself at the courts of Toulouse and Vienne; his natural courage had been developed by the exercises of youth and the encounter of peril; he knew better than his countrymen what constituted bravery, to which he gave its just value. The victories of Uric, who had subjected to the Visigoths nearly the whole of Aquitaine, did not dazzle him so much as to prevent his seeing in the conqueror the assassin of his brother Theodoric; and Gondebaud, notwithstanding his brilliant valour, ever appeared to him the murderer of Chilperic his brother, and of his wife and children. Felix, in the camp or in the court of the barbarians, was respected as a man who, like themselves, was a soldier, and who, more than they could boast of, was also a citizen.

Felix Florentius had acquired in the schools, in the assemblies of the Roman Lords, in the courts of the barbarian kings, as much knowledge both of men and business, as was compatible with a virtuous and a noble mind. His features, although not beautiful, yet prepossessed all in his favour. In his twenty-sixth year, the time at which our narration begins, he appeared older than he was; there was something grave

in his countenance, slow and deliberate in his demeanour, which marked that he had lived with Roman senators; but the strength of his broad shoulders, the just proportion of his height, somewhat below the middle stature, his firm step, shewed that he had shared the exercises of the barbarians. His dark eyes, rolling and sparkling, animated a countenance rather pale, and impressed on his physiognomy characters varying according to the feelings that ruled his soul.

That same year Felix had been called into the east by the death of his father, which happened at Constantinople soon after the coronation of the Emperor Anastasius. On his return he had traversed Italy, the sovereignty of which was at that time disputed with Odoacer, by the great Theodoric and the bold Ostrogoths under his command. That part of Gaul, which had not yet been invaded by the barbarians, nominally obeyed the emperors of the east. It still recognized that Roman empire whose sovereign resided at Constantinople, but no fostering or protecting authority existed in the government. Hence Felix Florentius, as soon as he returned into Gaul, hastened to Noviliacum. He thought that in a country abandoned to anarchy, in which the laws were without

strength, in which social authority was no where felt, it was the duty of the large land-holders to undertake the charges, rather than to seek the advantages of sovereignty; to advise, to encourage, to protect the peasants who dwelt on their lands, and at the same time to give them example and assistance amid the miseries which overwhelmed the west of Europe.

CHAP. II.

THE FUGITIVES.

" Julian found the military establishment entirely disor-
" ganized in Gaul; the barbarians crossed the Rhine with
" ease, and extended their ravages even to the cities situ-
" ated on the shores of the sea, whilst all the inhabitants
" trembled at their very name; for the Emperor Constantius
" had given him no more than three hundred and sixty sol-
" diers to reinforce his army."—*Zozimi Historiar. Lib.* iii.
p. 703.

BUT few months had elapsed from Felix Florentius's return to Noviliacum, when one day directing his looks to the opposite bank of the Loire, he saw with surprise an unusual movement. Herdsmen were seen driving their numerous cattle to the river; horses and mules arrived, laden with the spoils of ransacked houses; men on horseback armed with lances; others in greater number on foot, carrying their different instruments of tillage, formed successive groups on the bank; behind were seen women surrounded with children, and carrying

infants in their arms. All moved slowly, apparently overcome with fatigue; but at intervals the crowd was seen to quicken their steps, and to hasten towards the river; then again to stop, finding they were not pursued.

In the mean time some horsemen spurred their steeds into the river; they sounded its depth with their lances, then turned back, as it were disheartened; they tried various parts of the stream, where the curling waters seemed to point out a shallow spot on which their horses might recover breath. They likewise sounded the parts where the waters presented a smoother surface, proving the current to flow with less rapidity. After each fruitless trial they were seen to hold counsel together. Meanwhile some felled trees, and worked to bind them together, in order to form a raft; others threw into the water a pig, of all domestic animals the best formed for swimming, to force him, as it were, to attempt the desperate enterprize of crossing the river, which the horsemen were about to engage in; they followed his course with eager eyes, and evinced the greatest anguish when they saw him carried off by the current. At last, seeing on the terraces of Noviliacum some spectators attentively watching their motions, they stretched out their suppliant

hands. The waves of the Loire in those days were seldom furrowed by boats. The commerce between the different towns situate on its borders was trivial in the extreme; the agricultural produce of each district was amply sufficient for the sustenance of its inhabitants, and they rarely bartered with each other. As often as the provinces were alarmed by the approach of some hostile band, or by a wandering horde of barbarians, those who flattered themselves that a river might shield their property, destroyed on its banks all the boats which those formidable and dreaded pillagers might take possession of. The lord of some large estate was the only person who preserved a few barks for the purpose of ferrying his crops to the nearest city; but when he made no use of them, they were moored in a sheltered harbour, where he carefully guarded them as his most essential, yet most dangerous property; for during the times of war or invasion (and for these two centuries when had war ceased to rage!) these boats could bring to his very gates his most dreadful foes. On the other hand they could afford him a refuge when all other ways of escape were closed. Even when the approach of an enemy was not apprehended, it was necessary to keep the boats from the slaves, ever ready to make their escape,

after having pillaged the property of their masters.

Below Noviliacum a deep hollow had been excavated in the rock on which the castle stood. Of this they made a port, which communicated with the river by means of a sluice. Its entrance was always closed by massive gates of oak, fastened by strong padlocks; it was masked so as not to be perceived at a distance, for it was almost as necessary to conceal the possession of boats as it was to keep them in a place of security. This port contained two large galleys and two smaller vessels; but Felix had only three boatmen at Noviliacum; the others dwelt in the camp of the legionaries, which was distant more than a league: he launched, however, a boat, which might contain about twenty persons, and having left orders to assemble the mariners necessary to man the larger vessels, he threw across his shoulders the belt, to which his faulchion was appended, leaped into the galley, and steered towards the opposite shore.

As he approached, he remarked the agitation, the impatience, the hurry of the crowd, which awaited him on the northern bank of the Loire. Several women, raising their children in their arms, plunged into the water up to the girdle, anxious to be the first to enter the vessel; others

wrestled with those who hurried to the water's edge, wishing to be in the foremost rank; others stood apart, with their families and their baggage, and seemed to promise each other they would not separate.

Felix saw that he could not land amid this crowd, which, by rushing with impetuosity into his vessel, would inevitably cause it to founder. When within hearing, he ordered his boatmen to rest on their oars, whilst he hailed the fugitives, and asked whence they came, and what they wanted. Innumerable voices instantly replied; but in this confused medley of sounds, he could distinguish only the words "massacre," "conflagration," "barbarians," "Franks." But these words were sufficiently explanatory. Six years back Clovis, king of a small tribe of Franks, after having conquered Syagrius, had taken possession of Soissons; from that day the formidable adventurers, who followed his standard, or they who without acknowledging him for their sovereign, yet esteemed him the most skilful and fortunate among the chiefs of his nation, had each year scattered terror and destruction in some one or other of the neighbouring districts.

"I can receive no more than twenty persons "on board this vessel," said Felix, "but I have

" larger ones on the opposite side of the river.
" Say, are there among you any good boatmen
" who can manage them?"

" I can, I can," shouted a hundred voices together.

This hurry appeared to Felix an indication rather of the fear than the skill of those who shouted. He again addressed them: " there " must be in your party some ferrymen of the " Seine; who are they among you that have " managed boats on that river?"

" I have, I have!" repeated the same voices, and at the same time several men rushed into the water to reach the boat. Felix was obliged to unsheath his sabre, and to declare that none should enter but those whom he should appoint.

But now eight or ten horsemen, who by their cloaks of sheep-skin and long lances were known to be shepherds, advanced on the bank opposite the boat, and pushed back the unarmed throng. In the middle of this group was a female; she was veiled and wrapped in a common mantle, so that nothing had yet attracted the attention of Felix to her. He saw her give some orders to one of the shepherds, who, quitting her, ran through the crowd, and soon returned with about fifteen men. " These," said the female, addressing Felix, " are the only men

" among us who can manage a boat. Trans-
" port them with despatch to the opposite shore,
" for time presses. I fear the Franks are not
" distant; at least an hour will be required to
" perform the passage and to return, and in less
" than half that time, perhaps, all these unfor-
" tunate beings who now implore your com-
" passion, may be weltering in their blood."

At the same time the boat was pushed to land, and the ferrymen took their places. " And " you also," said Felix to the female who had spoken to him, extending his hand to assist her to embark.

" I will await your return," she replied; " I " will not accept of security unless it be shared " by those who have protected me."

" I will wait also," exclaimed Felix, springing on the shore. " Go, Diocles," said he to the veteran who held the tiller; " let us not long await your return."

Diocles bowed his head in obedience; the boat pushed off, and as some of the new ferrymen had seized tools of culture which could best supply the place of oars, all set to work, and the boat cut the waves with rapidity.

Felix drew near to the female who had addressed him; one of the fugitives told him that she was Julia, daughter of Julius Severus, sena-

tor and count of Chartres. Her face was concealed beneath her veil, but her voice and demeanour evinced that she was young; her shape was elegant and her action graceful. "I have "duties to fulfil towards these unhappy persons," said she to Felix; "but you ——" Felix, indeed, would have found a difficulty in proving what benefit he could render them by sharing their dangers; but he felt it impossible to remain securely in the boat whilst a woman voluntarily exposed herself to danger. "Let us prepare," said he, "to defend ourselves "for an hour; longer is not necessary for our "safety."—"Make the attempt," replied Julia. "But they have, for these two days, fled before "a handful of men," said she, casting her eyes upon the crowd that surrounded her. "We "came from the neighbourhood of Chartres; "that town the Franks have burnt; they there "bathed themselves in the blood of its inhabi-"tants. Those who fell under their battle-axe "were, doubtless, as much attached to life as "these fugitives, yet they defended it not."

"Have you been pursued?"

"Our band has so often been seized with "panic fear; has so often fled without looking "behind them, that I know not even how far "we have really been pursued."

“ Has the enemy any horse?”

“ The Franks are on foot, and fight only “ with their battle-axe, but some Sarmatian “ horse have joined them; they it was who first “ entered Chartres, and it is, without doubt, “ they whom we thought we saw at our heels, “ and who caused us our last alarm a few hours “ back.”—Felix eyed the assembled crowd to seek some men fitted to second him. Saving a few shepherds, accustomed to brandish the spear in guiding their flocks, or in repelling the wolves, he saw not one countenance that bespoke courage, or even that degree of resolution necessary to defend life in the last extremity. Fear, cowardice, and cunning were written on the faces of these slaves, accustomed to the most degrading punishments;—of these peasants—oppressed in turns by their masters and by the servants of their masters. Felix did not continue a research which shook his own courage. “ My “ friends,” said he to them, “ I ask of you but “ one effort;—but one only effort;—that will suf- “ fice to save both your own lives, and the lives “ of those most endeared to you. What then if “ you are pursued? If we are attacked on this “ extreme corner of the land, ere retreat is “ possible, will ye not prefer to die like brave “ men, defending your wives and your children,

" rather than suffer yourselves to be slaughtered " as lambs?"—While Felix was speaking, he observed that the men in the first ranks near him slowly drew back, and the women advanced in their place. Soon he was surrounded by females only. They replied to his exhortation with a sort of energy, " What you have said is true." They strove in their turn to animate the men of their band to the combat. " What are those " who cause you to tremble, more than your- " selves," said they, " their bodies are not more " inured to fatigue than yours; their swords " are not more keen. But these Franks have a " heart; ye have none."

Felix, convinced of the justness of the rebuke; of the impossibility of escaping, with such defenders, a horrid massacre, should the Franks come up before the boats returned, was pale with indignation, when he remarked that the shepherds who had accompanied Julia, brandished their lances, shuddering with passion. Instantly he unsheathed his sword and exclaimed to them: " Follow me."

Luckily the spot where the fugitives had gathered together could easily be defended. It was a plain of alluvial soil, formed by mud and sand from the river; but at the distance of four or five hundred paces, the hills at

the foot of which the Loire had formerly flowed, formed an amphitheatre; these hills were rugged; in more than one place the naked rock was seen, in others the steep slope was covered with bushes, with thorny ulex, and thick shrubs, which offered an impenetrable barrier. Two other winding paths led from the river and united at the top of the hill. By these paths only was the descent practicable, especially for horsemen. When Felix had climbed to the summit of the hill with the shepherds, and had convinced himself that no enemy was within sight, he called the peasants, to whom this information had given a little confidence; he ordered them to fell some trees, which he threw across the paths; he made them also open some trenches, by means of which he soon rendered the descent totally impracticable.

This work was not useless. As Felix was still occupied on the hill, a shepherd pointed to about twenty horsemen who were approaching at full gallop. They were mounted on small Tartarian horses; a bow was thrown across their shoulders, a long sword hung by their side, and their short tunic was furnished with scales of horn, which covered each other, the jingling of which was heard as they rapidly advanced. As soon as the pioneers who sur-

rounded Felix saw them, they uttered a loud shriek, and abandoning their labour, hurried towards the river. Their arrival brought disorder and scattered dismay among the crowd assembled on the banks. The women, the children, ran about in despair, and the mountains rang with their cries. However, the boats from Noviliacum at length arrived, and the daughter of the senator Julius Severus, resumed among the fugitives that authority which strength of mind gives over those who are conscious of their own weakness. Felix from afar saw her conducting the embarkation: first she placed the women and the children in the two largest boats, next the cattle, the principal wealth that remained to the fugitives, and the different effects which they had saved from pillage; she suffered not the men to embark until all that could be transported was placed in safety.

In the intermediate time the Sarmatians had arrived at the summit of the hill; but there they were stopped by the bulwark which Felix had raised across the path. When they saw thence the boats laden, they concluded that before they had surmounted the obstacle which stopped their progress, the fugitives and the booty which they carried would be out of their reach. They then discharged a shower of darts against

Felix, who retreated slowly with his shepherds; and the enemy instantly turned their horses and rode away. Felix, when arrived at the bank of the river with his small troop, found a boat waiting for him, in which he crossed the stream without difficulty and without danger.

CHAP. III.

A DAY AT NOVILIACUM.

" Thus slaves, on hearing a false report of their masters'
" death, throw away the curb, break the yoke, run from the
" table to the dance, from the dance to drunkenness, and
" make the deserted dwelling the theatre of their licentious
" sports."—*Claudiani de Bello Getico, tom.* ii. *p.* 144.

ALTHOUGH the boat which conveyed Felix quitted the bank some time after the larger vessels, yet as it drew less water, and cut the stream with more rapidity, it reached the opposite side before the others. Sylvia Numantia, supported by Eudoxus the grammarian, who had begun the education of our hero, and accompanied by two matrons and four young girls, her slaves, awaited his arrival on the bank. " My dear Felix," said she to her son, pressing him to her bosom, " I have this day " discovered that you possess the blood of Ma-

"jorian. Much anguish did I experience when "I saw Diocles return without you. Still more, "when from the top of the hill I observed the "horse of the enemy; but in the midst of my "troubles I gloried in having a son worthy of "my emperor and my husband."

"How many fruitless endeavours, Felix, have "I made to tranquillize your noble mother," said Eudoxus. "It was in vain I told her you would "not have remained on the opposite shore had "there been danger; that it could not be sup-"posed you would expose the precious life of a "senator to preserve the worthless existence of "a few peasants; it was in vain I assured her "you could have no other intention than to put "them under the guidance of your superior "prudence; hardly did she deign to listen to "me. But such are the cares of a mother, or "as is said by our sublime poet, Claudian, who "I may almost say instructed my childhood—

———————— "Sic æstuat ales,
"Quæ teneros humili fetus commiserit orno."

Felix knew that the high-sounding words of the grammarian were never united with noble thoughts, and that his quotations were the object rather than the ornament of his conversation, he therefore did not think it necessary to

reply. He pressed his mother's hand with a look of tenderness. " They will soon be here," said he, " what shall we do for them?" The vessels, indeed, had now crossed the Loire, but they had been carried down the stream, and some of the passengers were slowly towing them along the bank towards Noviliacum.

" The utmost kindness and hospitality," replied Sylvia, " shall be shown to those for whom " my son has exposed his life. Moreover, if " Julia Severa be among the fugitives, as she is " the daughter of one of your father's friends, " she will not be a stranger in our house."

At this moment one of the galleys arrived at the foot of the landing stairs. Julia was the first that landed: advancing towards Sylvia, with a mixture of dignity and deference, she said " Some unfortunate Romans are come " to supplicate the hospitality of a Roman ma- " tron; Gauls are imploring the benevolence of " a countrywoman. The miseries which for so " long a time have overhung our country, have " first fallen upon us; but, doubtless, fate in- " tends to save us from further calamities, since " it has directed us to you."

" Come, child of Severus," replied Sylvia, " the house of Florentius shall be to you a se- " cond paternal roof."

Julia raised her veil to embrace the matron who so cordially welcomed her; then Felix could see and admire features which before had been concealed from him. Julia was not yet twenty years of age; her hair was black, her eyes were of the same colour; but in her countenance much suavity was mingled with vivacity and dignity. The clearness of her fair complexion was rendered still more striking by the contrast of her raven locks. The fatigue of the day, the different emotions she had experienced, animated her cheek with the most lively colour; and as she spoke, that colour alternately increased and subsided. She was about the middle stature, but her demeanour imprinted on her figure a character of dignity and majesty, even when she wished to evince her respect towards the widow of the senator Florentius.

Felix could not withdraw from the contemplation of her graceful form: the noble and intelligent expression of her physiognomy confirmed the first impression that he had received from her generous conduct on the opposite banks of the Loire, and corresponded with the image he had pictured to himself from the sweet sound of her voice. He felt that had he then seen her, there would have been no merit in

wishing to remain where she remained; to share her fate appeared to him a blessing, and not a sacrifice. Eudoxus, viewing her with eyes that appeared not insensible to the attractions of beauty, repeated some lines of Horace rather happily applied. Julia blushed, but she immediately replied by another verse of the poet, on the sacred bonds of hospitality.

The disembarkation meanwhile continued, and the unfortunate beings, who at first had thought only of saving their lives, seeing themselves landed on this peaceful shore, recalled to their memory all the possessions, all the friends they had lost. Fear yielded to melancholy reminiscence. Each family assembled around the wretched remnant of its property. The women, seated on stones or trunks of trees, concealed their faces on their knees, whilst their children, weeping, embraced them; the husbands looked on in silence, holding by the halter a horse or an ass laden with the wreck of their household, or a cow which they had saved from the enemy. All seemed, for the first time to face futurity—a futurity which for them began on a strange land, and which they were not certain of rendering supportable even by the most painful toils.

The greater part of the fugitives already felt

the cravings of hunger. From the time they had quitted their dwellings these poor people had partaken of no other food than that which they had been able to bring with them in their rapid flight; and although accustomed to the coarsest fare, it was no easy matter to satisfy the wants of nearly three hundred persons. Felix, however, actively employed himself in providing for their wants. He distributed among them bread, broth, and salt meat. As soon as they had partaken of their scanty repast, he sent them to their final destination, placing the slaves with his slaves, the shepherds with his shepherds, the labourers with his labourers. Each was to admit one of the strangers to a share of his dwelling and provisions; the same kind of hospitality which the master afforded was to be shewn to these strangers by all his dependants. In a short time each family was placed in its appointed situation, and the yards of the castle and the surrounding meadow were no longer covered with fugitives.

Whilst busied with these emigrants, Felix had left Julia Severa to the care of his mother and Eudoxus. When he returned to them, a look from Julia evinced her gratitude. In thus ministering to the wants of her companions in adversity, he afforded more real pleasure to

Julia than she would have felt had his attention been solely confined to her.

During this interval Julia had been placed in her apartment with her nurse, the only one of her female attendants who was in the number of the fugitives. The whole right wing of the villa or castle of Noviliacum was occupied by the gynæceum, or apartments for the females. A long dormitory divided into small chambers or cells, occupied the back part of the building which faced the east, and overlooked the fields. Each cell contained but one bed, and was used only for the purpose of sleeping; but the opposite or western front of the building, commanding a view of the Loire, was divided into elegantly-furnished rooms which communicated with these chambers. Their walls were ornamented with costly hangings from Vienne and Lyons, gilt leather, or Persian carpets, which the merchants of Marseilles had imported into Gaul. The couches which extended along the walls were covered with the same materials; elegant drapery adorned the windows; the corners of the apartments were decorated with statues and vases of porphyry, and some pictures by the best Roman painters in Adrian's age were hung upon the pannels.

The eyes of the new guest soon turned from

this rich furniture to contemplate the still richer picture viewed from the windows. The Loire was thence seen to wind his broad stream under the tufts of ancient trees crowning the ridge on which stood Noviliacum; the abundance of his waters gave by turns to the landscape the ornament of a spreading lake or a rolling river. Above the castle where the meanders of the Loire concealed from the view a part of his course, the spectator might have fancied he saw a smooth expanse of water, which reflected the neighbouring objects: below, the eye could follow the long course of the river, which, gradually diminishing, appeared in the horizon a streak of silver. On both banks delightful slopes arose one above the other; the more distant were fringed with venerable trees; the others were covered with vineyards; most of them were crowned with ancient Celtic buildings, long since mouldering in ruin: of these some recalled the past glory of the Biturigi and the Carnuti (the inhabitants of Bourges and Chartres) who had fought on these frontiers; the others brought to recollection the gloomy superstition of the Druids, who offered, as appeasing sacrifices to their gods, the blood of human victims, and who had performed their rites in the neighbouring forests. The setting

sun shed his last rays on the summits of the most lofty hills, which in a fine autumnal day shone like fairy islands floating amid an ocean of vapour.

The apartments of the women opened upon a long terrace, set apart for them. Beneath this terrace were built the small cells of their slaves, and the large halls where they assembled to spin and weave their cloth, which was nearly all manufactured at home. Several passages communicated from the apartments of the mistresses to those of the slaves, but every evening these were carefully closed with strong iron bars, which effectually fastened each door. In a family, as in a state, the inevitable consequence of absolute power is distrust. A master had unceasingly to fear the vengeance of those servile beings who surrounded him; whose degraded condition, an outrage to humanity, was so often aggravated by cruel or unjust chastisement. The resentment of the women was often no less to be apprehended than that of the men; and seldom did it happen that a mistress exposed herself to be surprised during sleep, by any of those unfortunate females, to whom her death would have been the signal of festivity. From these precautions which she took against all her slaves, she excepted her nurse only, whose fidelity was insured by her feelings, ap-

proaching nearly to those of a mother. She was the only slave against whom the mistress did not fortify herself with bolts and bars.

The left wing, inhabited by the men, was divided nearly in the same manner. These two wings were separated from each other by a large open hall, rising to the height of the whole edifice, and consecrated to divine worship. At this the masters assisted from two galleries, one of which had a communication with the apartments of the males, the other with those of the females; they did not mingle with the slaves or the people, who always assembled at the bottom.

Julia, after having taken some repose, refreshed herself with a bath, and changed the coarse mantle which she wore during her flight, for a dress more suited to her rank, came to meet Sylvia in her apartment. It was there that the supper, the principal repast, was spread at sun-set, and it was there that Felix joined them. According to the Roman custom, low couches were placed along three sides of the table; Sylvia had given a share of hers to the stranger, the second was occupied by the grammarian Eudoxus, and the priest Martin, the chaplain of Noviliacum. Felix was alone on the third.

During the repast the presence of the slaves busied in waiting, had obliged the guests to

avoid in conversation the subject which occupied their minds, namely, the events of the day, and the dangers which threatened all the Romans. The two females were silent; Felix had eyes for no one but the fair stranger, while Eudoxus and Martin engrossed to themselves the whole conversation. These two men, equally intent on the good cheer; equally indifferent about all that affected others only; equally convinced, the one that his deep erudition, the other that his sanctity would ever render them desirable guests, and procure for them in the houses of others, the enjoyment of those possessions which they had not inherited from their ancestors; equally certain that neither the Franks, the Burgundians, nor the Visigoths could ever pillage their property, did not after all find the times in which they lived so disastrous as was pretended.

The grammarian, Eudoxus, had not forgotten that exactly a hundred years back, the grammarian Eugenes, educated as well as himself in an inferior situation, had worn the imperial purple. Each large family among the Roman senators, as also among the barbarian princes, had in its establishment a grammarian, who performed in turn the duties of secretary and pedagogue. But in the eyes of Eudoxus the merit of none of these hired literati appeared comparable to his own.

He knew, or at least he thought he knew, all that ever had been taught in the schools of Athens, Alexandria, and Rome; and he firmly believed that all sciences were comprised in the writings of the ancients. Rhetoric, Poetic, and Dialectic appeared to him the only paths open to human genius; these alone did he honour as a noble exercise of the mind, while he frowned with sovereign contempt on studies which related to the more vulgar interests of mankind, although perhaps improperly dignified with the name of science; such for instance as law, finance, military tactics, or agriculture. Though to power and rank he always showed the most humble deference, yet he regarded those who held a conspicuous station in society, as having no other duty to fulfil than that of providing for the comforts of the learned; and he estimated the merit of public characters by the protection they gave to literature. He basely adulated the great whom he stood in need of, but nevertheless his contempt even for them would sometimes escape him in terms by no means agreeable, for he had no sense of magnanimity or honour, and he could not attune himself to sentiments of generosity, which had no place in his heart.

The priest Martin, more disdainful, more re-

served, more sarcastic, and more learned, extended his contempt to all the objects of Eudoxus' admiration, although he had studied nearly in the same schools. He excepted dialectic alone; all the remainder appeared to him no more than frivolous science polluted with paganism. Even sometimes he suspected the faith of Eudoxus himself; and when he heard him comment upon the finest passages of the classic poets, or explain them with a deep knowledge of the ancient customs and ceremonies of Greece and Rome, he started from him with a feeling of horror, as if he had been in the company of a worshipper of the false gods. The ambition of Eudoxus was no more than a brilliant vision, an airy phantasm, towards which he directed his looks from afar; the ambition of the priest Martin was more steady, his aim was not so remote, and it rested on chances more probable. The empire had passed from the sway of the sword to that of the pastoral staff; in the annihilation of the secular power, the bishops had taken possession of nearly all the towns. Revered by the people, respected by the Roman lords, feared by the emperors, they had lost none of their credit, even when they passed under the yoke of the barbarians. They made to tremble in their turn those who had made the world to tremble;

they dictated oracles to which the conquerors submitted; they held the first rank in the council of the Burgundian kings, who with the fervour of new proselytes had embraced the orthodox faith, at their first invasion of Gaul; they were also consulted by Gondebaud, although he professed Arianism; even at the court of Toulouse, which was composed of much more ardent followers of those tenets, they were treated with deference by the Visigoths; and Martin felt certain that in severity of principle, extent of theological knowledge and zealous ardour, no priest of Aquitaine was more deserving of the mitre than himself.

Eudoxus came to the table with a fragment of Claudian in praise of Stilicho, where the poet celebrates the rapidity with which his hero passed the Rhine, making that river a barrier against the invasions of the Germans, forcing the Franks once more to follow the standards of Rome, and sheltering Gaul from the further depredations of its enemies. "I read these verses "this morning," said he, "when we had just "quitted the banks of the Loire; could any "thing be found better adapted to the circum-"stance: and when the poet says, *that the ra-"pidity of the leader triumphed over the impe-"tuosity of the wave*, does it not appear that he

"speaks of mine honourable patron, Felix Flo-"rentius? When he says, *that peace sprang "from the sources of the river, and that it in-"creases with the flowing of its waters*, would not "one think he alludes to the happy tranquil-"lity we now enjoy on the southern banks "of the Loire, contemplating the calamities "of our neighbours in the midst of our own "festivities?"

Felix, Julia, and Sylvia, although not struck with the propriety of these applications, had nevertheless, by monosyllables, assented to the opinion of the grammarian in favour of his well-known prepossession for the latest of the Roman poets; but the selfishness of the last observation, which unintentionally escaped him, excited the displeasure of his two patrons. Without clearly knowing in what manner he had displeased them, he saw that it was necessary to change the subject, therefore turning towards Martin, he asked him what he imagined could be the etymology of the name *Absis*, which the priests gave to a certain part of the church? Then without being at all discouraged by the look of contempt with which Martin appeared to censure his ignorance of all things sacred, he instantly offered his own explanation, for he had put the question for the

sole purpose of answering it himself; and once engaged in etymological disquisitions, the favourite object of his studies, nothing could possibly stop him. He then spoke for his own satisfaction, not for that of his hearers; no other speaker could be heard; his eyes were never taken from his own plate, except when directed towards the various dishes on the table, nor did he once venture to look the other guests in the face; it seemed he feared he should there read the impatience or the disgust produced by his long and tiresome dissertations.

CHAP. IV.

AN INVASION OF THE FRANKS.

" All that province called Armorica followed the exam-
" ple of the inhabitants of Britany, and gained its liberty in
" a similar manner, expelled the Roman magistrates, and
" formed a sort of republic."—*Zosimi Historiar. lib.* vi.
p. 826.

WHEN the slaves had retired, Sylvia, hoping that Eudoxus would stop of himself, waited for his first pause, but after one etymology came another, and another; " for heaven's sake, dear " Eudoxus, a truce to your etymologies; let us " now think of the situation of our guests, of " our friends, of ourselves. Do you not per- " ceive that the calamities under which they are " sinking are already at our own door? Julia " Severa answered our first questions concern- " ing this unexpected attack, but all the cir- " cumstances attending it are still unknown to " us; I hope she will now commence her recital " of them, make us acquainted with the train " of her misfortunes, and explain what at first

" might appear contradictory.—Where, charm-" ing Julia, is your father?"

" My father is at Soissons with that Clovis " who is acknowledged by the world to be the " most enterprising and the most valorous of " all the kings of the Franks."

" Is he then a prisoner?" said Felix.

" No: if there be any honour amongst the bar-" barians, if they have any respect for the law " of nations, he must be in safety, for he went to " them in order to negociate a treaty of peace."

" Peace! Under what conditions can we " expect it at their hands?" said Sylvia, " the " Franks, so long our allies and our soldiers, " have taken advantage of our civil wars, the " calamities of Italy, and the forlorn situation in " which the emperors of Constantinople have " left Gaul; they have turned their arms against " us, and since the defeat of the count of Sois-" sons, Syagrius, it is easy to foresee that they " will not grant us peace until they have strip-" ped us of all our possessions."

" Unfortunately," said Martin, " I can speak " to the truth of this, for at the time that in-" vasion took place, I was at Rheims with our " holy father the archbishop Remy, three thou-" sand warriors only came out from Cam-" bray, bearing on their shoulders the battle-

" axe, and commanded by this same Clovis; " and they routed or cut to pieces all the le- " gionaries and the federates, which the Count " Syagrius had been able to levy in the second " Belgium, that province of Gaul in which our " soldiers were the most numerous!"

" It is true," replied Julia, " since that time " there has not been a single battle in which the " Roman eagles have once been displayed; then " all resistance ceased, and in each campaign the " Franks advanced still farther in the midst of " defenceless cities. In the last six years they " have taken possession of or pillaged, one after " the other, Rheims, Senlis, Noyon, Beauvais, " Meaux, and last of all Paris, that charming " city, so beloved by the illustrious Julian, and " from which, little more than a century since, " he so often sallied to lead his victorious legions " against the barbarians."

" The illustrious Julian, did you call him," said Martin, " say rather the infamous apostate; " he re-established the filthy worship of the " idols from which Gaul is not yet purged, " which hath drawn upon us the wrath of hea- " ven, and bitterly are we now punished for the " crimes he committed, as well as for the victo- " ries he gained."

" To the munificent presents given to my an-

"cestor by Julian, we owe our fortune, our "rank, and even our very name," replied Julia; "besides the Franks are no more Christians "than Julian was, and would to God they "were equally tolerant; then the churches had "not been ransacked, the priests would not "have been led away into captivity, nor the "blood of many shed upon the altars. My "father, who held the rank of count of Chartres, "not by the grant of the Emperor Anastasius, "who appears to have forgotten us, but by the "confidence of his fellow citizens ——."

—"Every one knows," said Eudoxus, interrupting Julia, "that the illustrious senator, Julius "Severus, is more esteemed, more powerful, "and more rich than all the other inhabitants "of Chartres united. In whom could they with "more propriety confide than in him whose in-"terests were so evidently the same as their "own?"

"My father," said Julia, "sought for some "shelter against the danger which threatened "us; with this view he went to the court of "Clovis, and since resistance was impossible, he "wished at least to save us from the horrors of "conquest."

"Is this the manner," cried Felix, "these "barbarians receive the tenders of a Roman

" senator? What—they surprised you, they " pillaged you, even when you were negociating " peace—better have died sword in hand."

" My father felt as you feel; there is nothing " that he would not have attempted for the sal- " vation of our unhappy country, but his first " project failed. Eighty years have elapsed " since the cities of Armorica found in their " confederation against the barbarians that " safety which now we seek in vain. Rouen, " Bayeux, Evreux, Nantes, Rennes, and Van- " nes, without withdrawing their allegiance " from the Cæsars, have provided for their de- " fence by their own exertions. No barbarian " has yet been able to enter even the district " under their rule—still less the interior of their " walls; yet they are defended not by legion- " aries, not by federates, but by their own na- " tive soldiers. It was with these cities that my " father began a negociation; he wished that " Chartres might be included in the Armorican " confederacy; and if the senator Felix Flo- " rentius had resided for any length of time in " that country, he would doubtless know that " the plan of my father extended still further, " that it comprehended Tours and Orleans, and " all that remains to Gaul of liberty and Rome."

Felix declared that he had some knowledge

of this plan; Sylvia was better acquainted with it; for under the emperors the women were accustomed to interfere with politics, which were often considered as an intrigue of the *boudoir*, and were united with the gallantry or with the vices of the masters of the world. Without bearing the name of empress, many women had governed Rome; Placidia, Honoria, Eudoxia, had but too much influence over the last period of the empire of the west; and it was not more extraordinary to see in the higher ranks of society, women in the full possession of state secrets, than it was to find men resolved to know nothing whatever of the causes of those revolutions, the fatal effects of which they felt so severely.

" The project of my father," continued Julia, " was unsuccessful, although he pursued it with " ardour during many years; the cause of its " failure is that very territorial wealth which the " learned Eudoxus has just congratulated me " upon. Believe me the time is come when we " can do no more than weep over the extent of " possessions which our ancestors strove still " further to increase. We have driven from " our territory that free population which formerly constituted the country's glory, and now

"would be our bulwark. What have availed "us, these two last days, such boundless lands, "which produce not a single soldier? What "advantage does Chartres derive from her vast "wealth, when she cannot reckon one single "citizen? The cities of Armorica, it is true, do "not contain such riches; but they contain "many more men, and those men are free. "There the inhabitants are still Gauls, not "Romans; there the fields are still the pro- "perty of the peasant who tills them; and if he "pay a service to some more opulent citizen, it "is to a man whom he regards as the head of "his own family, and whom he thinks honour, "duty, and hereditary affection call upon him "to defend, still more than to serve."

"They are, I suppose, the very *Ambacti* "whom Cæsar speaks of in his Commentaries," said Eudoxus.

"Yes," replied Julia, "although five cen- "turies are gone by, Armorica is still nearly "the same as when Cæsar visited it. You "might traverse the whole of its western dis- "trict without meeting with one man who un- "derstands Latin. Nay, it is with a feeling of "pride that you hear the rustic reply to all our "questions that *he knows not Roman*, as though

"his answer were enough to inform us also "that he knows neither slavery, nor servility, "nor fear."

"Well," said Eudoxus, "now that I have "heard wealth called an evil, I shall no longer "be surprised if I hear people add that civili-"zation is the origin of slavery, or that the "hoarse, barbarous jargon of the Celts, is pre-"ferable to the rich, melodious language that "has been immortalized by so many prodigies "of eloquence and poetry. It was after the "same fashion that the ancient philosophers "were wont to enliven their repasts with the "discussion of such paradoxes, and certainly "that exercise of the mind is much more fitted "to the joviality of a feast than those gloomy "political arguments, which, when broached at "such a time, cannot be beneficial to the health. "But now we have come back to my old "ground, I will ask the beauteous Julia "which ——"

"Excuse me, honoured tutor," said Felix, interrupting him, "we will return by and by "to the superiority of languages; but pray let "us first hear how it is that project failed which "just now caused my heart to beat with joy, "inasmuch as it presented to me a new hope."

"The Armoricans," resumed Julia, "demand-

" ed a statement of the military strength of
" Chartres; and when they received it from
" my father they refused our alliance. They
" told us we were so weak that we could never
" be of any assistance to them; and being the
" most exposed to invasion, we should be con-
" tinually calling on them for protection. They
" added, that to defend us they would be obliged
" to march their troops too far from their own
" country, and thus damp the ardour of their
" own soldiers, who never fight well unless
" within view of their hearths; and that more-
" over they would be exposed to the treachery
" of our slaves. The final answer of the Ar-
" morican senate reached my father at the same
" time as the news of the entrance of the Franks
" into Paris. Commanding thus a passage
" across the Seine, they were now our imme-
" diate neighbours. No means of resistance
" remained to us. We had to choose either
" submission to the barbarians or death from
" their battleaxe. My father resolved on obe-
" dience, though the greatest humiliation to
" which a Roman senator can descend. He
" has demanded a conference with Clovis by a
" herald at arms, and is gone to Soissons."

" This then is our only resource," said Martin, " nay, our only hope; and since the time is

" come when Gaul must pass under the yoke " of the barbarians, it is to the Franks alone we " must turn our eyes. They at least are not as " yet tainted with heresy; and if the blessed " Remy will cause the light of Christianity to " shine upon them, they will receive it in all its " purity; whereas those Visigoths, who six " years ago penetrated to the Loire, and forced " me to flee to Rheims, would have brought " with them all the heresies of Arianism. But " pray how comes it that the Franks attacked " you while your father was proffering peace and " submission to them?"

" Clovis," replied Julia, " commands only " the Salian Franks; those who surprised us " at Chartres are the Ripuarii Franks; they " are under the orders of the treacherous Clo- " deric, son of Sigebert. He wished, I sup- " pose, to throw an obstacle in the way of the " treaty my father was negociating; he feared " that the policy of Clovis might snatch from " him that wealth which costs him so little " trouble to gain."

" But," said Felix, " I should like to hear " you speak of yourself; that subject you seem " to have forgotten in your narration."

" No, indeed," she replied, " I am not " enough of a Roman to forget the dangers to

" which I have been exposed. Need I say that " the recollection of them is attached to the " gratitude I owe to those who rescued me. " Can that horrid night of the eighth of the " ides of September ever be cancelled from my " memory? You know that the house of my " father, built upon the banks of the Eure, is " about half a league distant from Chartres; " there, in perfect security, he left me a week " before, trusting to the pending negociations " with the Franks, and the honour of Clovis. " The day before yesterday, in the evening, the " family had retired to their apartments, and " were already reposing in the arms of sleep; " I alone remained, enjoying on the terrace the " freshness of a beautiful night, when suddenly " a confused noise, in the direction of Chartres, " struck my ear. Methought I heard the min-" gled sound of warlike instruments and shouts. " Soon this noise was drowned in the howlings " of the watch-dogs, which, answering each other " from the farm-yards and neighbouring vil-" lages, seemed to warn us of the approach of " danger. At the same time pillars of fire rose " in the horizon in the direction of Chartres " and augmented my terror. Several of the " buildings of that city were, doubtless, a prey " to the flames. I awoke my nurse; soon all

" the family was aroused. Assembled on the " terrace, we reasoned among ourselves upon " the probable cause of this terrific spectacle; " we listened anxiously, we exhausted our ima- " gination in conjecture, when our attention " was absorbed by the horrid cries that issued " from the *ergastulum* of the slaves. Those un- " happy wretches, who were principally Van- " dals, Heruli, Gepidi, and Burgundians, had " perhaps been informed beforehand of the ap- " proach of their liberators; or, probably, the " tumult in our dwelling had caused them to " guess it; for their prayers ever invoke cala- " mities on our heads. They had arisen; some " among them had broken their bonds, and " combining their efforts were striving to burst " the gates of their prison. They hoped by " their shouts to intimidate their guards, while " they inspirited each other.

" My father was never an inhuman master to " his slaves; never did he aggravate the miseries " necessarily attached to their condition; but " you know how much their treatment depends " on those inspectors we call *villici*, slaves as " well as themselves; these persons conduct " them to their labour, and oftentimes they " abuse their borrowed authority, in order to " inflict cruel punishment on their companions

"in misfortune. Ours were detested by the "slaves; and if the *ergastulum* had been broken "open, we could have expected no mercy at the "hands of the captives. We therefore united "our efforts in closing the passages and bar-"ricading the doors, to secure us from the "attacks of these enemies, who were more to "be dreaded even than the Franks, as they "were already in the house. Meanwhile the "shouts which issued from the *ergastulum* grew "louder and louder; the shackles which the "captives had torn from their hands served "them as instruments of demolition; we heard "the repeated heavy blows, and every moment "expected to see them burst the walls, when "the shepherds whom you saw with me gal-"loped into the yard. They confirmed our "fears that Cloderic had entered Chartres at "the head of the Franks and given up that "city to pillage; they informed us that a party "of Sarmatian horsemen had joined him, some "of whom were scouring the country in search "of our castle. One of the shepherds, the son "of my nurse, had by his skill and presence of "mind, succeeded in sending them off in a "wrong direction. We had some chance of "escaping before they discovered the deceit, but "not an instant was to be lost.

" When this intelligence was made known, I " found that I was deserted by all, save this " shepherd and his mother. All the principal " officers of our household, expecting every " moment to see the Sarmatians come to the " assistance of the rebel slaves, took to flight " in all directions. My father's two secretaries, " the steward, the bailiff, the freedmen, the " domestic slaves, in whom we placed the most " confidence, had all disappeared. It was with " difficulty that Dumnorix, the shepherd, my " nurse's son, could find in our stalls a single " horse for me; all the others had been taken " by the fugitives. While he was saddling it I " ran into the apartment to take some jewels. " I could scarcely trust my eyes when I saw " the house so completely deserted. It was in " vain I called; it was in vain I sought for " my attendant; not one of those whom I " was accustomed to see constantly near me, " presented himself to perform the slightest " service. At length I departed with my nurse " and eight armed shepherds; and not being " able to divest myself at once of the habits of " civilized life, I took with me a considerable " quantity of gold, which could not be of any " service in my flight; but I forgot to provide " myself with provisions. We fled with the

" utmost speed from the house of my father, " and were at no great distance, when the in- " cessant clamour of the slaves was suddenly " changed to a loud shout of joy; they had " forced the door or burst the walls of their " prison—they were free.

" We took the road to the Loire, and soon " came up with some groups of fugitives who " were hastening to Aquitaine for safety. Some of " these were from Chartres, and they gave us a " dreadful account of the sacking of that town, " and the cruelties the Franks had committed. " Others had been flying still longer before the " same body of Franks; they came from the " banks of the Seine and the environs of Paris. " Those whom I pointed out to you as boat- " men were of this party. During two days " of flight and mutual suffering, Dumnorix be- " came acquainted with all our companions in " misfortune. The number of our band was " augmented on the road by the inhabitants of " all the villages through which we passed. " Terror pervaded the country of the Carnuti; " and that terror was augmented by the fugi- " tives, who, imploring assistance, described the " horrible cruelties which marked the invasion " of the Franks. The small party of Sarma- " tians which followed us to the banks of the

" Loire, stripped those who lagged behind, and " ransacked the churches and deserted villages; " they caused us to quicken our march, and " obliged us to keep together, for I think our " number kept them in awe, although we were " so little capable of defence.

" The fatigue of two nights of terror, and " a march of two days, have confused in my " mind all the more minute circumstances " of our flight. We reposed only when our " horses were sinking under fatigue. Then we " rested in the woods, the turf being our bed, " and I was overpowered by sleep in the day as " well as the night. Dumnorix, by his courage " and his judgment, perhaps also by his affec- " tionate devotion to me, had acquired a species " of command over the whole body. He di- " rected our march; he superintended our re- " pasts; he caused all the provisions to be " placed in a common stock, and he watched " over their distribution, that they might not be " exhausted until we reached the Loire. But " when we arrived nearly at the end of our " flight, he lost that authority which common " necessity had placed in his hands. To him, " however, I owe my life: he it was who persuad- " ed me to fly; he guided my steps; he watched " over me; he gave me food; he, in short,

"brought me unto you; and during the whole "time he evinced the same unremitted atten- "tion, the same devotion, and the same delicacy "in his services."

The recital of so many toils convinced Sylvia that the stranger stood in need of repose. She immediately called a slave, and led Julia to her apartment, preceded by torches of resin. When she retired, Martin and Eudoxus both expressed, in a lively manner, their admiration of the elegance of her figure, the accomplishments of her mind, and the charms of her conversation. They were neither of them much accustomed to eulogy; to counterbalance, therefore, this unusual effort, their observations soon took a turn of sarcasm, at the expense of other ladies whom they compared with her. Felix, though much more struck than they with admiration of her graceful figure, and what he had observed of her mind and temper, remained silent. He retraced in his memory what had just fallen from her lips. He fancied that he was meditating on the projects of Julius Severus; he strove to bring to his consideration whether or not the time was come when every Roman citizen should second his plans. He was, indeed, already thinking on the means of acting in conjunction with Severus, in order to give more im-

portance to the negociations he had entered upon. This seemed the only expedient that remained to shield from such dreadful calamities both his own family and the Roman cities in the neighbourhood. But although he thought he was occupied in the public interest only, his imagination incessantly strayed to Julia Severa. He thought he should render an important service to her father; he would shew to the Franks that all the Gauls were united by the ties of interest to the count of Chartres; he would assist him in preserving his rank; and when in conjunction with him, he should have obtained some pledges for the safety of the Roman province in Gaul, he thought he might ask in return some pledges for his own future happiness. He fancied his union with Julia Severa would gratify the ambition of the count of Chartres and that of his mother, and amply fulfil all the wishes he had formed.

CHAP. V.

A ROMAN COUNT IN GAUL.

"Are not almost all the men of rank in the cities of Gaul "become still more vicious by their calamities?—Have not "luxury and debauchery been carried to such a pitch, that "even the princes of the town had hardly risen from the "festive board, when the enemy entered their walls?"—*Salviani de Gubernatione Dei, lib.* vi. *p.* 139.

EUDOXUS and the priest Martin retired soon after Julia, but Felix awaited the return of his mother, with whom he held, that same evening, a long consultation respecting the measures they should adopt. The Loire appeared to them a sufficient bulwark against the immediate invasion of the Franks; but the danger came nearer and nearer, and in all probability would soon reach to them. With the exception of Armorica, not one of the Roman provinces had within itself the means of resistance; and even the choice of the barbarian master they were to obey was no longer left

to them. The Franks advanced in their conquests with rapid strides; the Visigoths, on the other side, retreated; it seemed that the minority of Alaric the Second rendered the latter incapable of defence, so that, even had the Romans preferred their authority to that of the Franks, they could expect no protection from them whilst their kingdom was torn with intestine commotions.

It was therefore the opinion of Sylvia, as well as of Felix, that the necessity of placing themselves on the defensive, was less urgent than that of entering into a league with the governors of the neighbouring cities, in order to continue the negociations which Julius Severus had commenced; to promise to the Franks, conditionally, obedience and tribute, provided the possessions and the persons of the Romans were guaranteed; to demand satisfaction for the last invasion, and to obtain restitution of the prisoners and booty taken from Chartres, as a pledge of the friendship which was to unite the two nations.

The vast possessions of Felix Florentius being situate at nearly an equal distance from Orleans and Tours, rendered it absolutely necessary that he should concert measures with the governors of those two cities, for that of Blois did not then

exist, or at least was no more than a hamlet. With both these governors, Felix thought it would be proper to have a speedy interview; but Sylvia did not conceal from her son the little confidence she had in the character and talents of these two men. The first, Numerianus, was indebted to one of the later emperors for his earldom of Orleans; the other, Volusianus, the archbishop of Tours, had, by the intrigues of the priests, attached the lordship of that city to his episcopal see. Yet the less Sylvia confided in the skill of the one or the sincerity of the other, the more necessary did she think it to take advantage of the present circumstance to bring them to a determination, whilst their minds were still filled with terror by the calamity which had befallen Chartres.

Felix and his mother were far from being easy respecting the fate of Julius Severus. Although Clovis was but young, he had already shewn his character. It was well known that to the bravery of a barbarian chief, possessing full power over the minds of his soldiers, he added an uncurbed ambition, to the gratification of which he sacrificed the most solemn promises and the most sacred oaths. They were convinced that so long as Julius Severus resided at his court as the representative of the Carnuti,

he would respect in him the right of nations; but now that Chartres was pillaged, and its population destroyed, it was possible that Clovis would regard Severus as no more than a common prisoner, whom it might be prudent to get rid of, since his presence in the camp of the Franks would continually reproach them with a breach of faith. If Clovis should regard Severus as belonging solely to the town of Chartres, all hopes were lost: whereas by making him the representative of the Gauls, and shewing to the king of the Franks, at an early period, the interest which the Roman cities took in his preservation, motives of policy would ensure the good faith of the barbarian.

Felix agreed with his mother that before dawn of day on the morrow, he would depart for Orleans; and his faithful Diocles, being ordered to accompany him, immediately sent forward a relay of horses, by a slave, to a place called the *Delubrum*, or Temple of Pan, being half way to Orleans. At the same time expresses were sent to the camp of the legionaries and that of the federates, with orders to bring a certain number of veterans for the defence of Noviliacum and the pass of the Loire, in the event of a sudden attack. Felix and Sylvia then separated in order to take repose.

On the following morning, two hours before sunrise, Felix and Diocles set forward on their journey, and finding fresh horses at the Temple of Pan, six leagues distant, they arrived in Orleans at the gate of the palace of the Count Numerianus, ere he had given audience to any one. Felix, when announced, was immediately admitted to his presence.

"This day," said Numerianus, offering his hand, "was already destined to be a day of joy "in Orleans; but it will be doubly so, since we "receive in our walls a guest of such rank. "Felix Florentius, you are come opportunely "to share the festivities with which my people "intend honouring my birth-day. Know that "the whole town is ringing with joy. I have "ordered distributions of bread and wine to "be made to the people in the public square. "The half of these largesses I shall furnish "from my own purse: I know I am not "forced to act in this liberal manner, and "that the *curia*,* which provides the other "half, might have provided the whole; but "you are aware, Felix, that men in our situa- "tion must be distinguished by their munifi-

* A name formerly given to the municipal magistracy of every city.

" cence. The Circus is prepared for a combat
" of wild beasts, and you will this evening see a
" bear from the Pyrenees, baited by Molossian
" mastiffs of the genuine breed. After these
" combats, a troop of actors will recite a short
" comedy, a piece adapted to the occasion, and
" written by the celebrated poet, Prudentius,
" my grammarian. I should have preferred,
" according to the custom of former times, the
" giving to the public a combat of gladiators;
" but that, you know, the scruples of our bishops
" will not allow; yet I think the populace, on
" such a day as this, would view with pleasure
" the punishment of some of those rebel pea-
" sants, those *bagaudæ* who ravage our lands.
" The souls of the vulgar, you know, delight
" in strong emotions, and we statesmen must
" yield to the taste of the multitude."

Felix had heard this long harangue without being able to put in a single word; besides, he was unwilling to damp the jovial spirit of his host by his alarms and mournful forebodings; though at the same time it occurred to his memory that not long since the inhabitants of Treves, the capital of Gaul, while assisting at the sports of the Circus, had been surprised and massacred by the Franks, yet he hesitated to give an old senator counsels of prudence, which might be unfavourably received. He congra-

tulated him upon the anniversary of his birth, and the interest his fellow citizens seemed to feel in his welfare; but he excused himself from taking any share in the festivities, by reason of an important business concerning which he had come to consult him.—

—"Business," did you say, replied Numerianus, "surely you must be aware that on such a "day as this we cannot talk of business! More-"over (and, by the bye, as your birth will one day "call you to a share of the government, my ex-"ample may be of some use to you,) I make it "an invariable rule never to talk of business "but on the two first days of the week. Be-"lieve, an old statesman, a man whom the Em-"peror Flavius Glycerius himself chose for the "governor of Orleans, and who, if I may ven-"ture to say it, has performed the duties of his "office for these nineteen years with no small "glory, I never met with any business that "could not be delayed."

—"Yet methinks the sacking of Chartres"—

"What say you—the sacking of Chartres?"

"Know you not then that the city of Chartres "was surprised on the eighth of the ides of "this month, by Cloderic, with his Ripuarian "Franks? That it was ransacked and partly "burnt, and that the greater part of its inha-"bitants are flying for their lives?"

This news disturbed the merry mood of Numerianus; he called a slave and bade him go instantly to the president of the curia, and desire him to attend at the palace. "These curiales," said he to Felix, "who are generally "nothing more than mere shopkeepers, artificers, and people of low rank, as soon as they "are called to the council, (or as they pompously "term it, the municipal senate,) begin to think "themselves of some importance, and sometimes "take it into their heads to have a will of their "own. But I contrive to keep them in good "order; the curiales of Orleans never venture "to disobey my commands, I warrant you."

"It was my great uncle," replied Felix, smiling, "the glorious Emperor Majorian, who "first gave, in his edicts, the name of municipal "senate to the curiæ: indeed his great ambition "appeared to be the increasing of their dignity, "and restoring to the citizens a consciousness "of their importance in the state."

"Yes, Majorian was one of those lovers of "theory who are never pleased with things as "they are, always dreaming about improvement, "as though we did not see every thing decline "and die in nature; and as if we alone should "be an exception to the general rule. Majo-"rian was an innovator. Such people some-

"times may delude by their words, but it is in "application and practice that the real states-"man is seen. With regard to Majorian, he "was never fit for business, as you may judge "by his end."

Felix had no desire to dispute with Numerianus on the preference due to practice or to theory; he therefore resumed the conversation on the pillage of Chartres, and the mission of Julius Severus to the court of Clovis. The count of Orleans did certainly listen, but it was with evident marks of impatience. Felix insisted on the necessity of treating with Clovis in the name of the free cities of Gaul, and particularly on the adopting of some measures for the security of Orleans, the most important of them all, as it stood nearest to the seat of danger, and, by commanding the pass of the Loire, was the key to the others.

"These are deep political measures," replied Numerianus, "which we must not adopt with-"out the most serious consideration: every body "thinks himself capable of forming projects, "but the care of digesting and executing them "must be left to those who have been long con-"versant with business."

"But were I myself to go to Clovis and treat "in the name of the towns on the Loire, would

"you give me authority to support the interest "of Orleans?"

"You go to Clovis! Why, don't you see "what has happened to Julius Severus?"

"It is for that very reason I think it high "time for us to be on our guard. Will you "give me some instructions?"

"Ah! here comes the president of the curia "whom I was expecting," cried Numerianus, anxious to escape from so serious a deliberation. "Come hither, Licinius, and pay attention to "what I say. You must first shut the gate "leading to Chartres, and be careful no one be "admitted coming from the country of the "Carnuti. If any enemy to public tranquillity "should scatter alarming reports of what has "happened in that direction, instantly throw "him into prison."

"My lord," replied the president, "I can "do no more than answer for the gate; you "know that the officers of the revenue have "for a long time complained of the breaches "every where seen in the walls of the city; and "why prevent the entrance of other Carnuti, "when so many hundreds have already taken "refuge here since their disaster?"

"Their disaster did you say? You then

" have heard something concerning the disaster " which has happened at Chartres?"

" The storming and sacking of that town by " the Franks, are known to all."

" And, pray, what say the people of Orleans " respecting this event?"

" They pity the Carnuti, but they add, that " their misfortune was occasioned by their own " imprudence."

" Are the preparations for the sports in the " Circus finished?"

" We await your presence to complete them."

" Have you a sufficient quantity of laurel for " the triumphal arches?"

" I have procured six waggon loads, and I " think that will be enough. But some soldiers " should grace the triumphal march of your ex- " cellency, and the only company we had here " took to their heels last night, as soon as the " news of the taking of Chartres reached them."

" The scoundrels are never to be found when " they are wanted. Well, well! we must make " the peace officers put on their armour, for " you must be sensible I cannot do without " soldiers;—and the cash for the gift, has that " been paid? Excuse me, my dear Felix, you see " how I am hurried. I thought proper this day " to make what we call a gift to the people; and

"as it is only with a view of attaching them to "the government, and rendering them more "faithful, you must be convinced that it should "be done at the expense of the community."

"Priscus, the jew," replied the president, "would not advance the amount of the next "impost at less than thirty per cent. interest."

"Well, I see we must come to his terms. "Let us hasten to the Circus. Farewell, my "dear Felix. On such a day as this I am "obliged to consecrate my whole time to the "duties of my office, but we shall meet again "at the Circus."

"How," said Felix, "do you take no pre-"cautionary measures against the attack of the "Franks?"

"The Franks, sir! They dare not! Orleans "is so strong a town!"

Numerianus then departed. Felix, astonished at so much stupidity; blushing at having travelled so far to meet such a man, remained some time motionless. At length he quitted the palace, at the gate of which he found Diocles in attendance. This Illyrian veteran had long followed his father. As a reward for his fidelity, he had received from Sylvia a house in the camp of the legionaries, and a plot of ground; but he preferred living at

Noviliacum, where he was considered, in some respects, a member of the family. He rarely quitted his young master, and above all, he delighted in following him where there was any probability of danger.

Diocles spoke but little, and seldom addressed Felix unless previously spoken to. However, when he passed under the laurelled arches, and the wreaths of flowers with which the palace of Numerianus, and all the streets leading to it, were decorated, he could not refrain from saying, in the warmth of his feelings, "some stones "in the walls of Orleans had surely been more "useful than so many flowers. But the old "saying is a true one, 'cowards at times are "more daring than the brave.' The gosling of "the Loire lays his head under his wing to "roost, at a time when the eagle would have "watched."

"Ah! said Felix, I fear, indeed, these poor "people will be the victims of their thought-"less confidence."

"No, the Franks are drunk to-day; they are "sleeping off the fumes of their wine."

"Yes, but probably they will make the at-"tack to-morrow, or at least in a few days; their "drunkenness will not last for ever."

"No, but it will be a long one, and half a "cohort of your true soldiers would make easy

" work with the fellows that entered into Char-
" tres; soldiers, said I? Where are they now to
" be found?"

" Hast heard any news of the Franks at
" Chartres?"

" Orleans is full of fugitives from Chartres,
" and fresh ones arrive every hour."

" The danger still exists then?"

" No, no, quite the contrary; the sheep
" never begin to run away before the wolf has
" carried one off. I tell you, master, be on
" your guard when cowards are quiet; when
" once they are frightened, the danger is almost
" always gone by."

" But, after stopping at Chartres, the Franks
" will advance."

" No, they will draw back to carry off their
" prisoners, and divide the booty, and if any
" one would buy the captives, this would be the
" time to follow them."

" If I had found any wisdom in Numeria-
" nus, I would propose to send a deputation to
" the king of the Franks."

" If I had supposed you came to seek for
" wisdom in Numerianus, I could have saved
" you the trouble of the journey; I tell you,
" master, what you wish to be done, do your-
" self; expect assistance from no one."

"Yes, but the count of Orleans must send "to the Franks for a safeconduct ere I can "trust myself in their camp."

"I will go," said Diocles, "and demand a "safeconduct for you."

"What, without any official protection; with- "out any pledge for your own safety?"

"I will carry the sacred wand, as is custo- "mary among them. The Frank kills his "brother to reign in his stead; he robs his "host; he swears, the better to deceive, and he "perjures himself in the face of God as well as "man; but he respects the ambassador, and "has never been known to commit violence "on him who bears the sacred wand."

Felix approved of the proposal of Diocles. He wrote to Julius Severus, giving him intelligence of his daughter, and informing him that he would soon be at Soissons, to act in concert with him at the court of Clovis, for the security of the cities of Gaul. For that purpose he requested him to obtain his safeconduct from the king of the Franks. He then partook of a slight repast, while his horses were resting, and departed for Noviliacum. Diocles, taking a wand, adorned with symbolical figures, honoured among the Franks, bent his steps towards the banks of the Seine.

CHAP. VI.

THE PRIESTESS OF PAN.

"Having afterwards entered the territory of Treves, (about "the year 550,) I found upon this mountain a statue of "Diana, which these heathens adored as a deity. The Al- "mighty having at length, by my preaching, worked on their "rustic minds, they assisted me in overturning this colossal "image, which my weak hands had not been able to shake, "though I had broken all the others."—*Vulfilaic, quoted by Gregory of Tours, book the eighth, chap.* xv. *p.* 319.

REGRET at having taken a useless journey, was not the only feeling that agitated Felix, as he returned to Noviliacum. He was also mortified and disconcerted at having no pleasant news to carry to Julia Severa: he had been from her a whole day, at the very moment she had claimed his protection; when she felt the greatest want of counsel, consolation, and encouragement, and he had done nothing that could tend to her advantage.

What he had seen of Julia's beauty, manners, wit, and disposition, pleased him; it was

the anxious desire of his mother, that he should marry, and he had promised to accede to her wishes: he was twenty-six years old; Julia was about twenty, their birth and fortune were equal; it was probable that no objection would be started by Julius Severus, an old friend of his father, who, in his present dangerous situation would eagerly seek for an additional support to his family. Matrimonial projects had more than once crossed the imagination of Felix, in the execution of which he fancied he should find no other difficulty than that of fixing his own determination. In his opinion there was scarcely a chance that Julia was already engaged: in the later times of the empire, most of the old families had been extinguished, either in consequence of a disinclination to early marriage, or the voluntary celibacy of their principal members, whose selfishness prevented them from undertaking the cares and duties of a father. The number of those who could aspire to the hand of the daughter of Severus was very limited, and recent events had been unfavourable to the introduction of suitors.

Felix, therefore, without fearing rivalship, waited only until his affections should be fully confirmed, and his resolutions immoveably fixed. He resolved to observe Julia, to seek opportu-

nities for developing her character and principles, and to say nothing that might involve him in an engagement. Moreover, in the present state of the country, when so many dangers overhung all those who bore the name of Romans; all that still remained of ancient institutions dear to their memory, and, which even threatened his family and himself, he thought that were he to give up his time to courtship, he should blush at his frivolity. He drove, therefore, from his mind the idea of Julia, to consider of the measures proper to be taken at his future conference with the bishop of Tours, and at the audience he had demanded of Clovis, and to determine on the arrangements he should propose to the barbarians, so as to gratify their avarice and ambition, without entirely sacrificing the liberty which the inhabitants of the Roman provinces still hoped to enjoy. He was astonished and almost angry at finding the image of Julia associated with all his thoughts, and at his ever seeing it before him, whether his imagination strayed to the camp of Clovis, or the cathedral of St. Martin at Tours.

Felix had intended to go from Noviliacum to Orleans, and to return the same day, but the distance was at least twelve leagues, and al-

though he had a relay, yet on his return he found the horses fatigued with the morning journey, and their speed much slackened. It was nearly sunset, when, accompanied by one slave only, he reached the Temple of Pan, where he had left his horses. These appeared to have been properly attended to during his absence, but the slave who had been sent the day before with the relay, and was to accompany him on his return to Noviliacum with the fresh horses, was too intoxicated to be of any service. When Felix found him in this state, it occurred to his mind, for the first time, that in the six remaining leagues he might probably regret the absence of Diocles. That veteran knew all the paths across the woods, all the shortest and safest cuts; his judgment was almost as infallible as his memory, and he could find his way, apparently with as much ease, in the night as during the day. The slave who accompanied Felix from Orleans, and whom, from the drunkenness of his companion he was forced to keep with him till he arrived at Noviliacum, did not appear by his countenance to possess the same skill; and when Felix asked him if he should be able to find his way in the dark, he replied, that the horses would not miss the road.

Felix would have preferred some other guide

to that of the instinct of his steeds only. These were eating their corn, which had been spread for them on the ruinous steps of an ancient temple dedicated to Pan, destroyed about fifty years previously, by order of a bishop of Orleans. On the ground near the steps lay some scattered columns; the slave, seated on the earth, leaning his back against one of these prostrate pillars, eyed his master with a look of respect and fear, and made vain efforts to rise; but to the repeated questions which Felix asked him about the road they were to take, he could give only unintelligible answers. The other slave had been sent to seek a guide; when he returned he informed Felix that he had been able to find no one in the neighbourhood but an old woman, who dwelt in a wretched habitation she had erected among the ruins of the temple, and who evidently had not sufficient strength to accompany the travellers.

Felix, rather astonished that the old woman did not come to him, desired the slave to conduct him to her habitation. The portal of the temple was entirely destroyed; the interior was filled with ruins, among which were seen to rise the tall stalks of hemlock, while ivy covered the side walls; the back wall was still standing; it served as a support to a kind of hovel, the

thatched roof of which rested on fragments of columns, architraves, and sculptured marble. Here Lamia dwelt: Felix found her seated at her door; but as soon as he approached, she arose with respect not unmixed with dignity.

Lamia was bent with age; but the strong features of her face did not evince any infirmity; her cheeks had fallen in, her eyes were sunken, her skin was shrivelled and yellow, and there was something terrific in her meagreness; yet the expression of her countenance commanded attention; when she spoke her eyes were animated; then inspiration appeared in her looks; in the sound of her voice there was an emphasis and a confidence of expression which formed a striking contrast with her apparent wretchedness. There was something strange even in her garments, which exhibited a mixture of dazzling colours, costly silks and filthy rags; and Felix imagined that in her uncouth habiliments he could trace some parts of the vestments which in all ancient pictures were given to the heathen priestesses.

"My good dame," said Felix, addressing her, "night falls, and I want a guide to point out my way."

"Night hath already fallen for us," replied Lamia, eying him with a piercing look, "and

" many wanderers have I brought back to the
" true light."

" I feared that at your age, you might not
" have strength sufficient to become my guide
" to Noviliacum."

Lamia had at first supposed that the words of Felix were figurative, and that in asking something forbidden by the laws, he had used equivocal terms, which in case of necessity he could afterwards retract; but seeing he wanted a guide only, she resumed with an air of indifference: " I am speaking of times of yore; you
" must be aware that now I cannot think of re-
" moving from my dwelling."

" You are not alone here, I suppose. Can
" you furnish me with a guide?"

" I am alone: no one shares with me the ha-
" bitation of these ruins; neither doth it be-
" hove any one to share it."

" How then alone on a heath, at your age,
" can you provide for your necessities?"

" Others have more need of me than I of
" them; those who consult me provide for
" me. My son, with the shepherd Sangiban,
" tends the flocks of your mother, Sylvia Nu-
" mantia, and he visits me every day."

This solitary life, and these mysterious answers, excited the curiosity of Florentius. He

examined Lamia more attentively; he cast his eyes also on her wretched dwelling, the door of which was open. He thought he perceived within, the altar of the temple and the statue of the god which formerly had been adored; and on that altar he fancied he could distinguish the libation cup and the sacrificing axe.

Struck by the view of these remnants of pagan antiquity, still apparently connected with common life, Felix entered the hovel, the better to examine these various objects. He then discovered the entrance to a staircase, which appeared to lead under the ruined temple, and whence proceeded the dim glimmer of a lamp. Anxious to examine this part of the ruins, he prepared to descend. Lamia stopped him. "Profane not, thou infidel, this the last sojourn "of the gods thou hast driven from their temples. Seek not to penetrate mysteries thou "no longer adorest, or dread the vengeance "of that Pan who scattered the armies of thy "fathers."

This imprecation struck horror in the soul of the slave who followed Felix; but as it produced no effect upon the master, Lamia continued—"The laws of Theodosius have declared "those who offer sacrifice to the gods of our "fathers, guilty of treason, and as such, have

" condemned them to death; but the laws of " honour condemn to eternal disgrace him who " executes the base office of informer. Surely " you will not endanger the life of an aged " woman; surely in Greece—in the school of " Athens, where all the illustrious philosophers " and the learned still profess our religion, you " have not learnt to become a spy upon the " adorers of the ancient gods, in order to de- " stroy them? But then, why become an accom- " plice in an action, which with you is a crime— " with us an act of virtue?"

Felix proceeded no further. " Your secrets, " good mother," said he, " shall not be divulged; " it is to your hospitality alone that I owe the " knowledge I have of them; but they astonish " me as much as they excite my curiosity. What! " has the god Pan still worshippers in this " country? I am far from feeling hatred to " those who profess a faith differing from my " own; but I did not think that among the an- " cient inhabitants of Gaul I should find any " who were not Christians."

" As for you great folks," replied Lamia, " hardly do you know that the poor man even " exists, how then should you know his religion? " There are still among us those who follow the " ancient gods of Rome; some there are also

" who worship the gods of the Druids; nay, " even this very year was the mistletoe of the oak " plucked in your forest. But alas! deserted " Gaul has lost her ancient race. Where, in " these days, are to be found the villages, " whence, in times of yore, were wont to come " the jovial procession of the Lupercalia? They " are in ruins, like the temple whose wreck now " serves me as a shelter."

" Since the destruction of the villages, you " then are the only person in this district at- " tached to the ancient worship?"

" A worship that has no followers would need " no priestess."

" You say you are a priestess?"

" I am; and not long since did a man, your " equal in rank, a senator, a count, come amid " these self-same ruins to burn incense before the " statue of the deity, and to consult the oracle. " Know you Julius Severus?"

" Is Julius Severus then a pagan?"

" He dares not profess paganism publicly. He " follows first of all the religion of power; and " though in secret he may honour the gods of " ancient Rome, yet he does not refuse to join " in the public ceremonies of your church. But " why should he profit by our guidance without " sharing also our dangers? Why should not

" his name serve as a shield to us—to us, who " by divine inspiration, direct his conduct?"

" Are his religious opinions known to many?"

" To all in this country who profess the reli- " gion of Rome. We all regard him as our " head and our guardian; but he mistrusts your " Christian priests; from them he conceals him- " self; but should he ever become master, then " will you see more incense smoke on our altars " than on yours."

Felix wished to know whether Severus had educated his daughter in his own faith; but of that Lamia knew nothing, or at least would say nothing. The other questions he put to her elicited no new information. Night was advancing, and as he could not procure any guide, he thought it prudent to stay no longer, but to take advantage of the twilight that he might not be obliged to rely entirely on the instinct of his horses.

This last glimmer of day-light was sufficient to enable the travellers to distinguish their way during the first hour of their journey. The country over which Felix was travelling, was wild; no large trees were to be seen on the hills: the bramble, the furze, and the heath, covered the soil; these shrubs, rising nearly to the height of man, formed brakes, which ren-

dered the pass difficult, but not impervious. Until now the path which Felix followed was the only one across these deserts, so that there was no chance of his straying. The slave was provided with a torch, which he could light as soon as the darkness of the evening should render its assistance necessary.

This path Felix took, his mind filled with the objects that had struck him in the dwelling of Lamia. He was neither a bigotted nor an intolerant Christian—but still he was a Christian; and the fear lest he should find Julia Severa a pagan, disconcerted all his projects—all the sweet visions which during the day had delighted his imagination. He felt no objection to treat of business, or to attach himself by the ties of interest or friendship to her father, although he was a pagan; but could he admit a difference of religion in the most tender and strict of all human bonds? Was it not probable that such a difference would raise an insurmountable barrier between him and his wife, and close the heart to all its most gentle effusions? Was there in morals, in philosophy, in politics, any question that did not in some measure include religion? How could he confide to his wife the education of his children, if they differed on this first principle? What had he not to fear at the

time when the approach of age gives new vigour to the errors of superstition? Was it not probable that his wife would abandon him at that time when, the attractions of youth ceasing to be powerful, man and wife feel the necessity of being united in heart, in thought, in reason? Was it not to be expected that the priests of another worship would gain over her mind an influence by so much the more fatal to domestic happiness, as it would be more clouded in mystery?

While Felix was absorbed in these meditations, the night had become dark, the slave had lighted his torch, and both continued to tread with rapidity the path before them, until they reached a small wood where the road divided. Felix was of opinion they should take to the right, but the slave asserted that their way was to the left; the overhanging branches of the trees prevented their seeing the distant hills, or any of those objects which sometimes are sufficient, even in the gloom of night, to distinguish the aspect of a country. The slave put his torch to the ground to examine the footsteps of horses; the last and most numerous were evidently on the left path, which, when left to themselves, their own horses followed, probably urged by the same motive. At the end of half an hour, this

path brought them to the bank of a small river, which both Felix and the slave were certain they had not crossed in the morning. The half wild horses of these deserts, going to drink at the stream, had left on the soil the footsteps which led them astray.

It was now necessary to turn back, and resume the other path; this the two travellers were about to do, when the barking of a dog, heard in the distance, induced them to hope that in following the banks of the river they might discover some habitation. After advancing two or three hundred paces, and passing a thicket which bounded their view, they saw before them, on the opposite bank of the river, a large fire blazing in the middle of the meadow, around which some men were watching with their dogs, while others lay asleep on some dried leaves; Felix called to them, and the slave waved his torch: one of the men on guard, following his dogs, then came to the brink of the river, so as to be able to reply to their questions. This was Dumnorix, the foster brother of Julia. As soon as he had recognised Felix, by the sound of his voice, he plunged into the river, the banks of which were in this place too abrupt to allow the horses to cross; he led them to a ford which brought them to the

meadow where Alan Sangiban had pitched his temporary camp.

Sangiban, the leader of five or six shepherds, whose business was to guard the flocks of Felix, had doubled his little troop by adding to it the fugitive shepherds who accompanied Julia. His hospitality, however, had not straitened his lodging, for it was under the canopy of heaven he had given them a place of repose by his side. Sangiban, a native of the Scythian deserts, had brought with him into Gaul the customs of his country. Three waggons, covered with tilts of skin or coarse wool, sheltered the wives and children of the shepherds; in these were the sanctuary, the bed, and the treasure of the wandering family; in these were contained all that was most precious in their estimation: no man but the husband durst direct his looks to the interior; the women, whose only dwelling was in the waggons, never quitted them without carefully veiling their faces. Large mastiffs faithfully watched these moveable habitations, around which the horses, the oxen, the sheep, and the goats daily assembled to receive their usual portion of salt. This opportunity the shepherds seized to milk the cows and the sheep; they then suspended their kettle from the branch of a tree placed on two upright

posts, and made their cheese in the open air. During the day they scoured the country on horseback, armed with lances, to keep off the wolves, and bring back the cattle which had strayed too far; in the night they spread under their waggons a bed of dry heath and fern; there they slept, wrapt in their fur mantles, and turning their feet towards a fire, which some among them in turn attended.

Sangiban, when he recognized his master, bowed respectfully before him. He offered to accompany him himself or to send two younger shepherds to serve as guides to Noviliacum. "It "is rather dangerous," said he, "to travel alone "in these wilds, where so many unfortunate "peasants, driven from their homes, have no "other means of existence than plunder. It is "misery alone that causes the increase of the "*Bagaudæ;* but they often wreak their ven- "geance on those whom they accuse of keeping "all the riches of the country in their own "hands." The two shepherds selected for guides being ready, Dumnorix declared he would also accompany Felix; he said he should be happy to render in that manner a slight service to the man who had preserved them from destruction, and who had so nobly shared the dangers of his gentle mistress. Felix, who eagerly

sought an opportunity to gain more information respecting Julia Severa, with pleasure accepted the offer.

Dumnorix felt as much delight in speaking of his mistress as Felix in listening to him. His language was animated, and he acquired a sort of half wild eloquence when, in a mixture of Celtic and Latin words, he endeavoured to convey an idea of her generosity, of her kindness, of her compassion towards all in sufferance, of her readiness to minister assistance to the aged soldier, to the hapless traveller, to the slave so often oppressed, so often unjustly chastised—a compassion which she shewed even to the beasts of the field, who seemed to know the goodness of her heart, and to seek shelter under her protection. Dumnorix had many anecdotes to relate of Julia: each of which, bringing Felix better acquainted with her amiable disposition, augmented his affection for her.

After having for a long time unsuccessfully sought, in the conversation of Dumnorix, for something that might clear the doubt Lamia had raised in his mind, he endeavoured to solve it by this direct question: "Is Julia a Christian?"

Dumnorix seemed astonished. "Do not then," said he, "all great men profess the reigning "religion of Rome; and now that the emperor

" is a Christian, are not all the senators of the " same faith?"

" I have reason to believe," replied Felix, " that Julius Severus still preserves at least a " concealed affection for the ancient religion, " and that on a late occasion he shared in the " worship of the gods of paganism."

" He would be more than a man," replied Dumnorix, " who could fathom what the mighty " Julius Severus buries in his bosom. But why " should we seek to pierce the mystery of differ- " ent religions? Almost every individual around " the fire we have just left, has a religion as dif- " ferent from that of the others as his language. " I was born in Armorica; my mother tongue is " the Celtic; my religion is that of the ancient " Gauls; I give to my gods the names Hesus, " Teranes, Camulus; Lamia's son, whom you " saw lying under the waggon, says I should " call them Mercury, Jupiter, and Mars; he is " a Latin, and follows the religion of his fore- " fathers, whose language he speaks. The Frank " Dietrich adores Theutates and Hermansul: " Alan Sangiban worships the scimitar, as his " ancestors did in the forests of Scythia; Ul- " philas, the Goth, is an Arian, and Philip, the " Greek, is a Christian. When, forsaking our " native language, we endeavour to converse in

" that of the Romans, which every inhabitant of
" Gaul is obliged to learn, we find that by dif-
" ferent sounds we express the same ideas. Let
" us hope that it is the same with regard to our
" different religions."

Thus conversing, the travellers arrived within view of the lights of Noviliacum, and soon after entered the yard of the castle, the end of their journey.

CHAP. VII.

THE BISHOP OF TOURS.

"The seventh was Volusianus, a man of northern extrac-"tion, very holy, very wealthy, and a near relation of the "Bishop Perpetuus, his predecessor. In his time Clovis "began already to rule in some of the towns of Gaul, on "whose account this Pontiff was distrusted by the Goths, "as he wished to place his province under the sway of the "Franks."—*Greg. Turon. lib.* x. *c.* 15. *p.* 386.

IT was past midnight when Felix reached Noviliacum with his guides; his mother and Julia were waiting for him; his delay had caused them mutual uneasiness, and if Sylvia expressed her joy when she saw him, and pressed him to her bosom, Julia also betrayed, by her deep blushes, that she had participated in the anxiety of her hostess. Her emotion escaped not the observation of Felix; he felt that although no mutual avowal had yet been made, a gentle harmony existed in their souls.

Felix described his reception at the palace of

Numerianus, the impossibility of fixing his attention, and how they had separated without coming to any conclusion. He thought he should have had to apologize for his want of success, but he found that his fruitless efforts had excited the most lively gratitude: each part of his narration left a deep impression on the mind of Julia, whose anxious eyes never lost sight of him; in expressing her obligations to Felix, the colour alternately animated her countenance and fled from her cheeks; her eyes still more than her words, appeared to implore a continuance of his protection.

Felix afterwards told them that he had sent Diocles to the camp of Clovis, entrusting him with a letter to Julius Severus, and ordering him to demand a safeconduct for himself. Sylvia shuddered at the idea of her son's placing himself in the power of the barbarians; and Julia considered it as another claim on her gratitude. It was for her father, and herself, whom he had before saved, that Felix was once more on the point of exposing his life. "My father," said she, "has some interest with the barbarian king. "He has now, doubtless, need of your assist-"ance; I think you will find his knowledge "of mankind, his zeal, and, more than all his "gratitude, of advantage to you in this new

" enterprize: surely my father can but love " him to whom his daughter owes her life."

This was a simple expression of her own gratitude: but there is a certain disposition of the soul, when words present alternately to the mind all the meanings of which they are susceptible; they then strike us as unexpected disclosures of what we most ardently desire. A look of Felix seemed to seek in the heart of Julia whether what he had done for her was sufficient to entitle him to her love: that look was so tender, so impassioned, that Julia's cheeks were suffused with blushes, as if she had said much more than she wished to express.

" If I have the good fortune to gain the " friendship of Julius Severus," said he, " it " may indeed decide the happiness of my whole " life." Julia, in her turn, fancying she discovered more in these words than they seemed to express, again blushed deeply.

The suspicions which Lamia had raised in his mind, now again presented themselves to Felix, and embittered his feelings. He thought it possible he might instantly solve his doubts, by finishing his narration, and describing his interview with the priestess of Pan; but this he had not the courage to do. If he was doomed to find that Julia was a pagan, he did not wish his

mother to be a witness of the discovery. He thought that were he left to his own efforts, he should have resolution enough to tear himself from what was now no more than the delightful vision of his imagination; but the counsels, the exhortations of another, even those of a parent, would have galled and irritated his feelings, the chance of which he was unwilling to encounter. He therefore ended his narration by describing his arrival at the camp of Sangiban, and the zeal which Dumnorix had shewn in his service. "He spoke to me of you," said he to Julia, "and the hours glided on rapidly. He told "me nothing which my heart had not antici-"pated; nevertheless I listened to him with "pleasure. I could never have thought we had "been so long on the road, or that I had given "any cause of uneasiness to my mother."

"It is indeed later than you think," said Sylvia, "let us retire to enjoy the repose we all "stand in need of; to-morrow we will consider "what is to be done with Volusianus."

"I pray heaven," replied Julia, "the skill "and artifice of that prelate may not do our "cause as much harm as the folly and weakness "of Numerianus. He is not our friend; and my "father considers him as one of those ambitious "and fanatic priests, who, under the garb of

" religion, strive to fix an iron yoke on the neck " of man; and who, to attain their end, are " careless of the consequences."

These words, spoken a few minutes before their separation, excited a painful emotion in the bosom of Felix. It was possible that Volusianus resembled the portrait Julia had drawn; but in the opinion she had given of one of the most eminent prelates of the Gallican church, she had echoed the sentiments of her father: was it not to be feared that the prejudices she had imbibed from him against the men, might also extend to the doctrines they professed?

The next day Felix met Julia and his mother at the church; they were assisting at the service which was performing by the priest Martin. He kept his eyes constantly fixed upon Julia; she appeared to take her part in the prayers without affectation, without ostentation, and like a person in the habit of attending the ceremonies of the church. These observations were not, however, sufficient to dispel his apprehensions. The pagans did not believe they offended their gods by participating in the rites of Christianity, and most of them occasionally conformed to the religious customs of those among whom they lived.

After prayers Felix went to his mother's room, where the breakfast was prepared. Julia, in her morning dress, refreshed by sleep, and appearing already to have domesticated herself at Noviliacum, seemed in the eyes of Felix more beauteous than before : her looks expressed confidence and gratitude; her behaviour to Sylvia shewed that the day they had passed together had given them an opportunity of perfectly understanding each other, and forming a closer attachment.

Felix expressed a doubt whether he should proceed to Tours on that day, or wait until the morrow. "You will not find our apostolic "father, Volusianus, at Tours," said the priest Martin; "he is gone to Angoulême to attend a "conference to which he has been invited by "Cyprianus and Tetradius, archbishops of "Bordeaux and Bourges, in order to provide "for the province of Aquitaine; but when he "hears the news of the late invasion in his "neighbourhood he will hasten his return." Felix knew that the prelates of Gaul kept up an active correspondence by means of pilgrims, monks, and mendicants, who were constantly passing from city to city; he knew also that the priest Martin, who, at the expense of his patron, hospitably received the strollers, was an

agent of that correspondence. He could not, therefore, doubt the accuracy of his information; and having calculated, with Martin and Eudoxus, the time requisite for Volusianus to receive news at Angoulême of the inroad of the Franks, and for his return, he concluded he might, without any inconvenience, pass four days with Julia, and put off his journey to Tours until the fifth. This unavoidable delay disconcerted a project, the execution of which they all regarded as of the highest importance; it would, nevertheless, be difficult to express with what patience the parties most deeply interested in the business resigned themselves to their disappointment.

The four days which Felix and Julia passed together, augmented the affection they already felt for each other. When they conversed, their opinions, their feelings, and their tastes, were the same on almost every subject: when they examined the pictures and the statues in the gallery; or when on the terrace, they viewed the landscape and the varied effect of cloud and sunshine, the same beauties struck them both. When Felix read the most celebrated poems of the age of Augustus, or of Pericles, Julia shed tears of delight at the sound of his voice. Sylvia, who was always present at their conversation,

watched with pleasure their growing attachment, and delighted in the hope that her son had found a companion worthy of himself. Julia yielded without diffidence to her feelings; they seemed to her the effect of gratitude only; for with her affection had always been a virtue, not a crime.

At length the day fixed for the journey arrived, and Felix departed; but on the road to Tours his mind was much more busied with Julia, than it was while he was travelling to Orleans. He recalled to his memory all the words he had heard her utter, all those looks, those sudden emotions, which, being less restrained than language, communicate more effectually the inmost thoughts of the heart. To all the objects they had surveyed together, he attached the image of her eyes, either downcast, or gently raised and fixed upon himself, sparkling with joy, or filled with tears; he thought of their walks, and then to every tree, to every seat on which they had rested, to every landscape they had admired together, he united the remembrance of the different inflexions of her voice, which again made his heart to beat with rapture. When his mind strayed to the consideration of what he should do at Tours, or in his future journey to Soissons, it was to anti-

cipate the moment when he should present himself before Julius Severus, and demand the hand of his daughter.

On his arrival at Tours, Felix was struck with the appearance of a whole town busied in the ceremonies of religion. A few soldiers were on guard at the gate, but it was not on them the townsmen relied for defence; their hopes of security were centred in a chapel erected in front of the guard house. Tapers were burning, in vast numbers, before the image, which was said to have the power of working miracles; the priests were officiating at the altar, and the soldiers were on their knees at the time Felix passed. In most of the shops which opened on the principal street, were seen exposed for sale *Agnus Dei's*, crucifixes, crosses, images of St. Martin, intended to be consecrated at his altar; priestly vestments, church ornaments, and books of devotion. Churches, chapels, and oratories, were seen in every street; and on all sides resounded the chaunt of priests, busied in reciting their litanies.

As he advanced towards the cathedral, containing the shrine of St. Martin, Felix met Volusianus, successor to that archbishop, clothed in all the splendour of the sacerdotal garb; before him were borne the cross, some miraculous

images and standards; a band of musicians marched in the front, and the prelate was surrounded by priests chaunting hymns, and followed by many thousands of men, women, and children, moving slowly two by two, carrying tapers in their hands, and repeating the church prayers. Felix entered the cathedral, thinking that if he remained there, he should best know when the sacred ceremonies ended; and, consequently, when he might obtain an audience of Volusianus. The absence of all the priests who joined in the procession was scarcely perceptible in the cathedral, although their number was very great, for the perpetual chaunt, called the *Psallentium*, which was continued night and day by successive choirs of monks, had not been interrupted one moment.

St. Martin, the metropolitan bishop of Tours, had now been dead ninety years; he was considered the apostle of Gaul, and his see was regarded as the capital of the catholic religion in this province. His tomb was adorned with pious offerings, brought daily by the faithful; his vast cathedral, an inviolable asylum, was peopled with victims of tyranny, fugitive slaves and malefactors, who fled thither from the oppression of despotism, or the pursuit of justice. The devotion Felix had remarked in the streets, as well

as in the church, was, however, unusual; he was soon informed that public prayers of several days' continuance had been ordered by Volusianus at his return, on the occasion of the late inroad of the Franks at Chartres; and these ceremonies were performed as a measure of precaution against any attack that might be premeditated by the barbarians on the provinces to the south of the Loire. Felix was informed also, that the procession would in a short time return to the cathedral, and that in less than two hours he might obtain an audience of Volusianus.

The appearance of Volusianus was venerable, but inspired at least as much fear as respect. His stature was lofty, and his body, although exhausted by fasts and watchings, was upright, and, as it were, inflexible; his complexion was sallow, his cheeks fallen, and his brows shaded by short black locks; for age, which had left its marks on all his frame, had not whitened his hair: the contrast gave a peculiar harshness to his physiognomy. His piercing looks announced in the successor of St. Martin the severe judge of repentant sinners, rather than the kind father of his people; the undaunted champion for the sway of the faithful; the dread persecutor of pagans and heretics; a man, in short,

who would stoop to use all the resources of worldly policy to serve what he considered to be the interest of heaven.

Felix made known to him the intention of his visit, his desire of conferring with him on the means of defence which the inhabitants to the south of the Loire might adopt to shield themselves from the inroads of the Franks, or the negotiations by which they might prevent their aggression. Felix informed him that he had already asked a safeconduct of Clovis, but that before he proceeded to the court of the king of the Franks, he wished to receive the advice of the holy bishop of Tours.

"You may have already observed, young "man," replied Volusianus, "that the same "cares occupy our minds; but we have placed "our cathedral, and the flock confided to us, "under a protection more sure and more potent "than that of worldly policy. Yet are not "the negotiations with Clovis to be neglected: "you will find him disposed to listen to you; "our brethren in God are not without some "power over the mind of that barbarian, and "the name of Volusianus is not unknown to "him."

"The assurance your holiness gives me," (holiness was the title then given to all bishops,)

" fills me with hope," replied Felix; " we shall " then be enabled to render the unfortunate " Julius Severus——"

" Of him we need not think," said the old man, interrupting him, " the clemency of the " Almighty hath at length given place to jus- " tice; the chastenings of his daring foe are but " beginning; long and direful will they be;— " heaven grant his example may instruct and " terrify the idolaters, and all the false Chris- " tians, who though submitting to the outward " forms of the church, still place their trust in " the vain images of lying gods."

" I know neither the religious opinions of " Julius Severus, nor his conduct towards the " church; of him I know nothing more than " his misfortunes, the ransacking of his house, " and the loss of his property; besides, the in- " habitants of Chartres——"

" They are no more worthy of pity than he; " have they not fostered abomination in their " city longer than any of the inhabitants of " Gaul? Was it not in the land of the Carnuti " that the council of the Druids annually as- " sembled? Was it not there they elected " their chief, and taught their hellish doctrine? " Was it not there they worshipped the demons " whom they took for gods? Now that the work

" of justice is completed let us rejoice, for the " iniquity of the fathers shall be visited on the " children, even unto the third and fourth gene- " rations."

" But," replied Felix, not wishing to be entangled in disputes, " if we do nothing for the " Carnuti, what shall we do for ourselves? " Shall we wait until the Franks pass the Loire " as they have passed the Seine; until even the " sanctuary of St. Martin be pillaged——"

" Thou man of little faith! St. Martin needs " not thy assistance; when the season shall " come, he will himself defend his people! But " it is not for ourselves; it is not for Tours " alone, 'tis for the whole of Gaul, 'tis for pos- " terity we must think. We will go to Clovis; " we will offer to him our arms, our treasures, " our forts; we will shew him the army of the " saints, ready to combat for him; we will say " unto him be thou our king; be thou the eldest " son of the church, and we will make thee the " most glorious monarch of the west; thee will " we obey as we obeyed the Cæsars of Rome, and " we will teach the Franks also to obey thee."

" What! Clovis the idolater; Clovis the wor- " shipper of Theutates and Hermansul?"

" Say, Clovis who as yet is defiled by no he- " resy, who shares not in the abominations of

" the Arians, like that Visigoth Euric, whose " yoke we were for some time obliged to bear; " or like his youthful son, Alaric the Second, " who haply thinks himself still our master: " say, Clovis who hath not abandoned truth for " error, as did the king of the Burgundians; " who knoweth not even the name of that exe- " crable *Henoticon* we are threatened with by " the Emperor Anastasius. Clovis believes and " obeys. Though his soul be not yet enlight- " ened, he loves the pontiffs of the Lord, and " does justice to them. He is an idolater, but " our most holy father Remy (*Remigius*) the me- " tropolitan bishop of Rheims, is his counsellor " and his oracle. That holy man informs me " by letter, that he despairs not of soon bringing " Clovis within the bosom of the church. Mean- " while to men of the flesh must we speak ac- " cording to the flesh; we must point out to " him the honours, the wealth, the absolute " power that await him, and then will Clovis be " a Christian. I fear none but that Julius Se- " verus: he is, I suppose, at Soissons with his " daughter?"

" His daughter is at Noviliacum with my " mother."

" What! at Noviliacum? Say, is she of extra- " ordinary beauty?"

This unexpected question, put by a man of such solemn deportment, in the middle of a discussion on the deepest interests of religion and policy, completely disconcerted Felix; he blushed, he stammered, and at length he answered "yes, of very extraordinary beauty."

"You are in love with her, young man," said Volusianus, fixing his piercing eyes on him. "You are in love with her; beware then lest she "become the wife of Clovis."

"What, the wife of Clovis! Who can ima-"gine such an event possible?"

"Her father. Clovis is young, and governed "by his passions; his wife will decide his policy "and his creed. If he demand a consort of the "kings of the Visigoths, the Ostrogoths, or the "Vandals, he will fall with them into the fatal "heresy of the Arians: if Julius Severus seduce "him, he will oppress the priesthood, perhaps "re-establish paganism: if our holy father "Remy should succeed in his plans, Clovis "will be on our side."

"But Clovis is married—he has a son."

"Clovis is married according to the law of "the Franks; but has he yet received the bene-"diction of the church? What is marriage "among the infidels but a shameful concubi-"nage? This truth Clovis begins to see, and

" provided his son Thierry be not bastardized, " he refuses not to take another wife."

Felix shuddered; a new fear presented itself to his mind; Julia, whom he adored, without daring to believe it; Julia, to whom he had not yet spoken of love, to whom he was not engaged, but whom in imagination he always associated with his future fate; to whom he involuntarily referred all his actions, and all his wishes—that Julia was perhaps promised to another. Her father, instead of willingly granting his request, as he had expected, might have a scheme, an ambition directly opposite to his views. The colour fled from his cheeks; he felt an icy coldness about his heart; he feared to speak, lest his trembling voice should betray his feelings. He however restrained himself, and continued the conference, apparently occupied with political affairs only. His inward agitation escaped not the observation of Volusianus; but the prelate thought proper to say no more on that subject. He considered it indispensable to hinder Julia from marrying Clovis; and the vigilance of another lover might be useful in preventing that union; but it formed no part of his schemes to favour a marriage between her and Felix, and thus expose himself to the power and skill of Julius Severus, the enemy of priesthood, se-

conded by all the influence and wealth of the senator Felix Florentius.

The sentiments Volusianus had expressed, inspired Felix with an equal detestation of his religious fanaticism, and his policy; but on the other hand he found him fully disposed to second him in the project for the furtherance of which he had come to Tours. Volusianus eagerly seized this opportunity of sending to the head quarters of Clovis a negotiator of so illustrious a name. He communicated to him his correspondence with the counts of Mans, Angers, Poitiers, Bourges and Limoges; the result of the conference he had just held at Angoulême, with the metropolitan bishops of Bourges and Bordeaux, and the last news he had received from the court of Alaric the Second; he explained to him what Aquitaine had to fear from the Visigoths; in short he made him perfectly acquainted with all the policy of that central part of Gaul, where the want of strength had not yet annihilated intrigue. The schemes of the chiefs of these different towns; their offers, their demands, their jealousies, all were clearly unfolded to Felix, by the man who more than all others might be said to hold the key of such secrets. After a conference which lasted great part of the night, Felix took leave

of Volusianus, having arranged with the prelate that full powers should be transmitted to him at Noviliacum, in the name of all the towns near the Loire, and that he should set out for Soissons as soon as he received his passport.

On his journey back to Noviliacum, Felix, constantly agitated by the new alarms the prelate of Tours had excited in his mind, meditated on the means of discovering the projects of Julius Severus, and the sentiments of his daughter, in order to know whether her heart was disengaged, whether she was worthy of his love, and whether he ought to foster or stifle an attachment which daily became stronger. He at length resolved to take advantage of the intimacy his services had established between them, to give an account of his conference with Volusianus, and observe how she would receive the news of the projects her father was said to have formed.

In the apartment of his mother he simply explained what he had learnt concerning the policy of the different parties, the intrigues, to which Volusianus had given him the key, and the negotiations that had been entered upon with Clovis. But when he obtained a private interview with Julia, he told her with concealed emotion, that, if he could believe the bishop of

Tours, she herself was much more concerned in the plans of her father than he had at first imagined, as her hand might become the pledge of reconciliation between the Franks and the Romans of Gaul. As he spoke, he observed her attentively; he could easily perceive that she had long since been informed of the designs of her father; but, from the death-like paleness of her cheek, and the tears that filled her eyes, he had reason to believe she did not wish to see them carried into effect.

As Julia did not instantly answer, Felix continued: "if it be true that Severus thinks of "giving his daughter to the king of the barbarians, he will meet at least one man who will "strive to thwart his designs." Julia directed her eyes towards him with an expression of tenderness and gratitude; she cast them down again, when she heard Felix continue in a stifled voice, "that man is Volusianus, who "doubts the faith of your father, and dreads for "his church the power with which you would "then be invested."

"It was not to hatred," said she, "that I ex"pected to be indebted for a defender."

"Be then indebted to love for a defender," exclaimed Felix, throwing himself at her feet; and while, with impassioned emotion, he pressed

her hand to his lips, sobs stifled the voice of Julia.

"Yes," said she at length, suddenly mastering her feelings, and forcing him to rise, "Yes, "I accept the noble defender whom friendship, "hospitality, and all the feelings of generosity "now present to me: I accept him too as a "protector, not only against my enemies, but also "against even those who love me, and who seek "what they call my elevation. I may, perhaps, "swerve from filial obedience and duty; but I "hold in horror the thought of becoming the "wife of a barbarian, of an enemy to our country, to our laws, to our religion; to all that "is sacred among us: the wife of a man who, "from his most tender years, has given proof "that in cruelty and treachery he will equal the "most cruel and treacherous of his race. Ah! "save me from him; save me from my threatened destiny, if it be true that the gods, or "rather the demons, have announced that I "must be his."

These last words excited the astonishment of Felix; he asked for an explanation, which Julia instantly gave him, although she was loath to accuse her father of so abominable a design. "I know not," said she, "whether the creed of "my father differ from that in which he has

" educated me; whether impressed with the re-" collection of what Rome was, he connects in " his mind the gods of the eternal city with her " triumphs; whether he thinks the religion of " the Deciuses and the Scipios better fitted than " that of the Constantines and the Theodosiuses " to revive the ancient virtues which have now " disappeared from the world. At least he " appears convinced that the priests of the an-" cient gods obtain by supernatural communica-" tion the knowledge of futurity; in this belief he " is confirmed by the Christian priests, for they " attribute the revelations of the oracles to " demons. I know that in a temple, not far " distant from this place, an aged priestess " stood before him on the sacred tripod amid " the ruins, and in her mysterious language " named me as the spouse of the future con-" queror of Gaul."

In this description Felix recognised Lamia and the Temple of Pan, whither chance had conducted him a few nights before. He discovered with pleasure that Julia was not a pagan, though she spoke without acrimony of a religion which till lately had been that of the whole empire, and which her father still secretly professed. All that heretofore had caused him to dread an union with her was now removed. It was pro-

bable he would find on the part of Julius Severus many obstacles he had not foreseen; but he had an understanding with Julia, he knew that he was loved by her, though she had not directly avowed it: never had any one day produced so much happiness for him; never had he looked forward to futurity with more confidence.

CHAP. VIII.

JOURNEY TO SOISSONS.

"At the time when Paris, as we are told, was for five "years exposed to the attacks of the Franks, the famine was "so great in the suburbs of the city that many perished of "hunger."—*Vita Sanctæ Genovefæ, Virginis, cap.* vii. *p.* 370.

AFTER his return from Tours, Felix passed a few days with Julia at Noviliacum; these were sufficient to establish habits of intimacy and confidence between them. He did not repeat the word love which he had uttered once at her feet: she, in her replies, had spoken of friendship only; but nothing was forgotten of that which had once been understood between them. He thought that as long as she lived under his roof he should wound her feelings, and be guilty of a breach of hospitality, were he to express all the emotions of his soul. He did not wish her to experience embarrassment or restraint in the asylum he had given to her. But he thought it sufficient to impose silence on his voice; his

looks were not subject to the same restraint, and the language they spoke was understood.

All the trifling events of the day, the monotony of which had often been irksome to Felix, acquired a new charm from the presence of Julia. The priest Martin seemed in the morning to have more fervour in his prayers, more tenderness in his denunciations against other men, more respect when he contradicted, more moderation when he condemned. Eudoxus appeared less absurd in his witticisms, less pedantic in his display of learning, less tiresome in his etymological dissertations. By the desire of Julia, Felix prevailed on Eudoxus to give them a lecture, and they left to himself the choice of the science he would teach. The grammarian, who was, in reality, very learned, undertook to expound the different systems of Grecian philosophy; he was delighted with the attention of his two young pupils, their docile silence, and the praises they lavished on his erudition and his mode of teaching; but he did not remark that, while he was speaking, a word, a phrase applicable to their situation and feelings, plunged them into a delicious distraction; the exchange of a look made them feel that their minds were wandering to the same point; and this reverie in the presence of each other was more expres-

sive than language, it was unconstrained, it embraced all their future life, all their wishes, all their hopes, subjects to which they discreetly forbade themselves the approach in conversation.

Meanwhile Diocles arrived at Noviliacum from Soissons, with a safeconduct for Felix Florentius and his suite: he also brought letters from Julius Severus to Felix, Sylvia Numantia, and his daughter. Severus expressed with elegance, rather than with feeling, his gratitude for what the hosts of Noviliacum had done for his daughter, the protection they had afforded her, and the hospitality they had shewn to the other fugitives from his estates. He appeared neither downcast by the inroads on his territories, nor cheered by the hopes of better times. His letters were faultless, but they gave no information respecting himself. He merely made known his intention of relieving Sylvia from the burden with which she had so generously encumbered herself, and of sending for his daughter to Soissons as soon as he could ensure her a safe and convenient journey. He added that, in his opinion, females should prefer a residence in the rear of the conquering army, to that of a country on the point of invasion. Should the inhabitants of Noviliacum be of the same opinion, he promised to obtain for them,

in the new kingdom of the Franks, under the protection of Clovis, a suitable dwelling, where they might await the events of future days.

Felix clearly perceived that Severus wished Sylvia to accompany Julia to Soissons; but neither Julia, his mother, nor himself, thought it necessary to take this hint. The calmness of Severus led to the belief that he was perfectly satisfied with regard to the intentions of Clovis towards himself, and that he expected to recover as a courtier, or perhaps, as the father-in-law of the king of the Franks, what he had lost by the sacking of Chartres. Julia and Felix agreed in this opinion, and both felt that this conviction should hasten his departure.

The letters of licence and instruction from the different towns, in whose name Felix was to treat, arrived nearly at the same time; even those of Numerianus, the count of Orleans, were not long delayed; he had sense enough to obey the word of command when it proceeded from the bishop of Tours. Felix Florentius was to present himself before Clovis as accredited only by the cities situate between the Seine and the Loire, namely, Orleans, Chartres, Mans, and Angers; those to the south of the Loire, Tours, Poitiers, Bourges, and Limoges, were obliged to keep up appearances with

Alaric the Second, king of the Visigoths, whose protection they had before accepted : Felix was, however, to offer in their name the same conditions at the moment when the Franks should be preparing to cross the Loire. These cities bound themselves to pay the kings of the Franks the same tribute they had formerly paid to the Cæsars, to obey their commands and to acknowledge them as sovereigns, with a stipulation that private property should be respected, the booty already carried off by the Franks returned, and the laws and municipal magistracy preserved.

Felix departed on the 5th of the calends of October (27th of September) with a numerous suite, a litter, some waggons, a few spare horses, and a brilliant equipage, the whole under the direction of Diocles. He had been told that the retinue of an ambassador would raise his dignity in the eyes of a barbarous nation; whereas such a display was certainly rather calculated to excite the cupidity of the Franks. But pride ever finds an advocate in the heart of man, and the wealthy never want plausible reasons to convince themselves that their luxury proceeds from their philanthropy.

Felix took the road to Chartres; the Frank, Cloderic, with his band of Ripuarians, had evacuated the city, and it was asserted that

Clovis had severely reprimanded him for violating an armistice concluded in the name of the whole nation. Cloderic, however, had plundered the churches as well as the private houses of all their valuable ornaments and furniture, and had carried off large troops of captives, who were sold as slaves at Paris.

Several of the fugitives had already returned to Chartres; they examined their deserted dwellings, the doors and windows of which had all been forced; they sought the valuables, the provisions, the magazines, which they fancied would have been preserved from pillage, as they had secreted or buried them in the walls or under the floors. The insatiable rapacity of the Frank had, in most cases, rendered their precautions unavailing; he had in one hour discovered the secret hoard which the owner imagined would for years have escaped the most diligent search. In many churches and houses were still seen the extended corses of aged men, infant children, and infirm persons, who had not been able to escape, and whom the ferocious soldier had murdered in cool blood, because he could expect no ransom from their friends, nor any gain by sending them to the slave mart. On all sides were seen the marks of gore and smoke left by the soldiers; and the spectator could not fail to

be astonished that so small a body of men had been able to commit such a general devastation. Felix hurried through the town, which excited no other feeling in him than that of grief.

It was at Paris that Felix met, for the first time, a body of Frank soldiers. An enormous tower, built on the southern bank of the river, defended the wooden bridge by which he was to enter into the island, at that time comprising the whole town. In front of that tower the Franks were standing on guard: they were easily distinguished from the other inhabitants by their blue eyes and cropt flaxen hair, the loftiness of their stature, and the carelessness of their looks, which seemed to announce that nothing was worthy of their curiosity, and marked the torpidity of their souls, except when war awakened their energy, or their eyes were sparkling in revels and carousals. They spoke to each other in a loud voice, and their rough, barbarous language, a dialect of the Teutonic, sounded harshly in the ears of a Roman: several of them were playing with their battle-axes, a weapon most formidable in battle, whether they fought with it hand to hand, or hurled it to a distance with never-failing precision.

The ancient inhabitants of Paris, although not yet accustomed to their new servitude, had

often felt the dreadful effects of the fury of their foes, without being able to discover its cause: they, therefore, endeavoured to escape observation, and neither to see nor be seen: they spoke in a low tone, never stopt in the streets, never directed their eyes to a Frank; they even avoided meeting each other, or asking questions which would have called forth none but answers of sorrow. Civil life, however, seemed to have resumed its usual course; the shops were open, the artificers were at work, yet they were ever on the watch; the instant any unusual noise was heard, each hastened to barricade his house, and no townsman was ever seen to run to the aid of a neighbour who implored his assistance.

Soissons, the end of Felix's journey, where he arrived on the third day, had for six years been under the rule of the Franks, its inhabitants were, consequently, more resigned to their fate than those of Paris; the police, moreover, was better regulated by the victorious army, justice was more easily obtained in cases of oppression, and wrongs were more surely redressed. Commerce was enlivened by the presence of the king, his chief officers, those who had enriched themselves by the plunder of the provinces, and all who wished to gain the favour of the new monarch; the merchants were content, the

streets were filled with litters, horses, and servants; and though in many palaces the marks of recent devastation might still be observed, other inhabitants had taken the place of those whom war had cut off, and a new luxury had succeeded to that of the ruined families who had been driven from their houses.

At no great distance from the palace of Count Syagrius, then the residence of Clovis, was the habitation assigned by the king to Julius Severus; there it was that Felix was expected, and there he alighted. The original owners had been murdered or compelled to fly; no one cared for their fate, and yet he who but lately had seen the Franks plunder his palace, accepted, without scruple, of those same Franks, another palace and other furniture not less splendid, which these conquerors disposed of according to what they called the right of conquest.

Julius Severus received Felix with attic gracefulness, with all the politeness of an experienced courtier; his expressions were full of gratitude, his manners shewed the pleasure he felt in receiving so illustrious a guest, the son of his dear friend and his benefactor. His conversation was rendered singularly agreeable by an elegance of language, a delicacy and precision in all his expressions, an art of penetrating the

thoughts and feelings of those he addressed, and conforming to them by anticipation; to this he added a perfect knowledge of mankind, which enriched his remarks with novelty and truth. His features were noble, his countenance open; his hair, and his beard, which, contrary to the usual custom, he wore long, were white, though he was not advanced in years. He wore the toga, and looking on him one might have fancied he was an ancient Roman senator descending from the Capitol.

Nevertheless the frankness which appeared imprinted on his countenance and the seeming carelessness of his conversation, did not lead him to commit himself by using expressions he had not previously considered and duly weighed; in his politeness there was no more than the surface of cordiality, and his eloquence was never animated by sincerity. At a first interview his object was to please, to flatter, and, if possible to obtain some power over the person he addressed; this ascendancy when once gained, he preserved with most men for ever; but those who possessed real frankness and honesty, were not long before they began to suspect they should never penetrate to the real man through the cloak of the courtier.

Julius Severus, after reading his daughter's

letters, of which Felix was the bearer, desired him to detail all he had heard of the flight from Chartres, and all he had himself done at the pass of the Loire. He interrupted him to express his gratitude and his admiration of what he called the heroism of Felix; then again he questioned him. He afterwards entered into the most minute circumstances respecting the two conferences of Felix with Numerianus and Volusianus. He listened with such fixed attention, he knew so well the character and dived so deeply into the thoughts of men, and when he spoke of his own plans, of the negotiations he had commenced, and the correspondence he had kept up, it was with such an unstudied appearance of openness, that Felix, charmed by the contemplation of an understanding so elegant and refined, thought he had learnt much from him; nor until he had brought to his recollection all that had passed, did he perceive that Julius Severus had, in fact, told him no more than he already knew. What had appeared to him so novel, consisted not in facts, but rather in philosophy applied to politics. Severus had the talent of generalizing his ideas and ascending from facts to principles, in order afterwards to descend from principles to individuals; he presented constant exercise to the mind, a suc-

cession of ideas ever rich, ever ingenious; but he revealed nothing respecting present circumstances, the knowledge of which he kept to himself alone.

It was agreed, that on the following day, Julius Severus should introduce Felix to Clovis, and explain to him the offers of the Gallic cities. Felix had express orders to communicate with the archbishop of Rheims, should he be at Soissons, and to act only in concert with him. From the representation given to him of the religion of Severus, he expected the latter would have wished to prevent his seeing the prelate; he was agreeably surprised when the senator offered to conduct him to the palace of St. Remy; when he appeared to converse confidentially with the archbishop, as though they agreed in their plans. We ask permission of our readers to be absent from the conference of these grave personages, where nothing was treated of but state affairs, which, in these days, would be totally uninteresting.

CHAP. IX.

THE KING OF THE FRANKS.

"We take leave of thee, O king; but since thou wilt not "restore to thy nephew the towns that belong to him, we "warn thee that the axe which struck off the heads of thy "brothers, is not yet destroyed, and more easily still shall it "cause thine to fall."—*Gregory of Tours, lib.* vii. *cap.* 14. *p.* 298.

THE day before the calends of October, Felix was conducted with great ceremony to the audience of Clovis. The palace inhabited by the king of the Franks, possessed all the elegance and majesty of Roman architecture in its best age; but the luxury and refinement of the ancient masters of the world formed a strange contrast with the rude disorder of the new conquerors. Couches covered with Persian carpets, tinged with the richest colours, were placed around the apartments instead of chairs; but as these were not sufficient for the soldiers who kept guard in the anti-chamber, bundles of

straw were strewed about the floor, on which several soldiers were carelessly sitting or lying, while the greatest personages of the state were crossing the hall to approach the throne. The ceilings were adorned with magnificent frescoes, painted by the best masters; but, as if to compete with them in skill, the Franks had drawn on the walls with charcoal the figure of Hermansul. Curtains of the finest texture, decorating the windows, served to temper the glare of day; but one of these having been torn down, a soldier's mantle supplied its place. In the hall of the throne, where Clovis was expected, the spectator might have fancied he saw a deputation from the senate of Rome, so great was the number of Gallic lords, wearing the toga, who assumed the titles of senator, patrician, and count; for since the reign of Constantine, this last title was given to the governors of cities and their dependencies in the Roman empire. The patricians of the enslaved empire came to bow before the king of the Franks, but while waiting for his entrance, they endeavoured to raise their dignity by an affected tone of loftiness towards their inferiors, and by the strict etiquette with which they measured out their mutual compliments.

Numerous prelates, the archbishop of Rheims,

the bishop of Soissons, and the abbots of several monasteries, were to be seen in the crowd. Each was accompanied by a retinue of priests; each sought to insure respect by displaying the pomp of his pontifical vestments in this pagan court, where several priests of the Franks, worshippers of the gods of Germany, were mingled with them.

In the peaceful throng of courtiers were seen many Franks clothed in armour. Some raised to dignity or enriched by plunder, exhibited in their dress the gold and silks they had won by the sword; others wore mantles of the coarsest texture, or the unshorn skins of sheep. But, though their rank and their dress might differ, the fierceness of their looks was the same in all, and shewed they knew neither fear nor respect. They did not enter into conversation, nor even speak to each other, unless they had something of importance to communicate; then their tone of voice was loud and firm. The Gauls addressed each other in whispers, as if they were apprehensive of disturbing the counsels of the prince; the Franks, on the contrary, appeared to think of themselves alone, careless of annoying others by their vociferation, which might even reach the ears of the king.

Clovis at length made his appearance; he was twenty-six years of age; his demeanour

was haughty and majestic; his stature lofty, and his features those of the people to whom he belonged; for, in barbarous races, the character of physiognomy is rather national than individual; he was distinguished from the other Franks by his long hair, which hung on his shoulders: this was the distinctive mark of the royal race, which Clovis wore in common with a great number of chieftains, all of them, like himself, descendants of the great Meroveus. From these the soldiers had the privilege of electing the commander they chose to obey. He who was unsuccessful rarely escaped the poniard of his more fortunate competitor.

Felix was presented to Clovis, and graciously received; his letters of credence were handed to Aurelianus, the Latin confidant of the king of the Franks, who was employed in his most important affairs. Felix explained, in a general manner, the nature of his mission, avoiding every allusion to subjects which might compromise the interests of the inhabitants to the south of the Loire with the Visigoths.

Several Roman senators then spoke; they expressed their joy at seeing the sway of Clovis extending daily over the Gauls, being convinced that henceforth the illustrious Clovis would consider himself not only the king of the Franks,

but also their consul or patrician, and the representative of imperial majesty in Gaul.

St. Remy spoke in his turn, reminding the king that religion alone could give stability to empires; that religion alone could unite Clovis to his people, and place him upon a throne far more elevated than that which he could gain by the battleaxe of war. He declared that the God of the Christians had called Clovis from the forests of Toxandria; that he stretched forth his arms to receive him; that he asked of him only the homage of his heart, and would in return ensure to him victory over all his enemies; in this life would shower on his head the blessings of prosperity and happiness, and in the life to come would crown him with eternal bliss.

Clovis encouraged the hopes of his Roman subjects, and listened with pleasure to the expressions of respect made by these great personages: he appeared to be pleased with their adulation, and to feel how much more his pride would be gratified by their servile obedience, than by the haughty independence of his own Franks. The prophecies of St. Remy appeared in some measure the developement of his own schemes; his reply to the archbishop was expressive of deference and respect; and whether he yielded to conviction or to political prudence, it

was easy to discover he already inclined towards the new religion. Clovis spoke Latin with fluency: the Franks admitted into the council were not such perfect masters of the language, and therefore took no share in the debate, although they sometimes interrupted the speakers by sarcastic observations in their own tongue, which were received by their countrymen with loud bursts of laughter.

At length the Frank Theodoric raised his voice, " I do not well understand what these " priests of the conquered mean," said he: " they come in the name of their God, and " offer us a victory they could not obtain for " themselves: neither do I see the drift of these " commanders of unwalled cities and defenceless " provinces, who attempt to dictate conditions " to us, though their swords never drew blood. " If they want a consul, or a patrician, let " them choose him among those who wear " the toga; if they can, let them elect one who " has not yet learnt to run away. For our " part, when we chose a king, it was not to " make peace, it was to wage war; we chose him " to divide among us the possessions of these " people, for it is fit the property of cowards " should pass to the brave. As for thee, Clovis, " remember, thy duty is to lead us on to battle,

" not to give pledges to our enemies. If thou " preferest peace before war, begone, we shall " not want for chieftains, the long-haired race " of kings is not yet extinct: but forget not that " the battleaxe of the Frank has more than " once made the head of him who negotiated " with the foe to roll in the dust."

This speech was received with shouts of joy by all the Franks present at the assembly; they did not confine themselves to noisy acclamation, but unsheathing their sabres, clashed them in the air, and struck them against their bucklers, making the din of war resound through the hall. The senators and the priests crept into corners, and terrified, huddled together, apprehensive that the Franks might pass from threats to deeds by a sudden massacre of the first Gauls that fell in their way.

When the tumult had in some measure subsided, Clovis addressed the Franks; but as he wished to be understood by them only, he spoke in the Teutonic tongue: " My noble Franks," said he, " never have ye yet seen me to flinch in " the fight, or appear wearied with warfare. " Never have ye seen me restrain your hands " from plunder, which you shared among your- " selves. I have contented myself with glo- " riously bathing in the blood of my enemies,

" and spreading a feast to the crows, while our " ancestors looked down on us, and rejoiced in " the walhalla. No other reward do I claim for " myself; to you I abandon all the wealth of " these slaves. But Hermansul himself contemns " not prudence; we must combat our foes one " after the other, not altogether."

" But one year has elapsed since you con- " quered the Tongrians; know you whether " their allies of Thuringia will not come to " avenge them? The Germans eye us with " jealousy; the Burgundians and the Visigoths " were established in Gaul before we, let us take " advantage of the riches of these Romans to " raise ourselves above our other enemies; they " themselves shall not hereafter escape us. My " noble Franks, leave to me the cares of policy, " I will reserve battles enough for you; then " will you know whether the sight of flowing " gore gladdens not my heart as much as your " own."

The words of Clovis calmed the fury of the Franks, and when he ceased to speak, he was applauded with as much clamour as Theodoric. Among the Romans who were present, many understood the Teutonic language, and could therefore discover that even in their presence Clovis had pledged himself to deceive them; but

they had not the courage to face their dangerous situation. They preferred the opinion that Clovis was dissembling with his Franks; and that he was obliged to adopt deceitful measures in order to bring them to his views; they hoped the struggle between the two nations would be finally decided by the arts of intrigue; and in these arts they were as certain of superiority, as in battle the Franks were of victory.

Clovis was anxious to dismiss the assembly: he ordered the stirrup-cup to be brought in; for the Franks never quitted the palace of the king without taking refreshment. A goblet was given to each lord. When the cup-bearer offered one to Theodoric, the cautious Frank rejected it. Clovis observing this, instantly took the bowl, drank of it, and then handed it to Theodoric, who now, without apprehension, drank off its contents. Not a word passed between the two; but the silent scene escaped not the eye of Felix. He saw that the horrid art of poisoning was not less known in the camp of the Franks than in the court of Constantinople; but the barbarian shewed his mistrust in a more open manner, and the monarch appeared less offended at the suspicion.

The Franks had already retired, and the Gauls, whose motions were more stately, began,

in their turn, to leave the hall of audience; Julius Severus, also, was on the point of departure, when Clovis desired him to remain. "Has this ambassador of the Gauls brought "your daughter with him?" said he, looking at Felix.

"Most noble sire, it was not possible —"

"Then let her be conducted to Soissons as "soon as possible."

This order, heard by all who remained in the room, excited a lively emotion in more than one breast. Felix thought the fate of Julia was fixed, ere he had been able to make an attempt to save her, and at a time when he could not even foresee the possibility of affording her protection. Severus, on the other hand, saw his schemes unfolded to the public, before they were ripe for execution. St. Remy felt that the jealousy manifested by the Franks had urged Clovis to reject the wife offered to him by the priests: this lady was a Roman, of a family entirely devoted to the hierarchy, and which owed its honours to that attachment alone. The prelate was the first to speak.

"Most noble sovereign," said he, "in our "sacred books we read that the king Ahasuerus "placed agents in all the provinces of his em- "pire, whose office it was to assemble the young

" and beauteous virgins, and to conduct them to " Shushan, his capital. When decked with befit- " ting ornaments they were presented to the king, " and she who had the good fortune to please " him, was declared queen. If your excellency " would vouchsafe to choose in the same manner " among the Roman daughters, our bishops " would present to you none but virgins, in " whom the beauty of the soul should outshine " that of the body."

" Is Ahasuerus one of your prophets," said Clovis, " or is he one of the saints of the hea- " venly host?"

" No," replied St. Remy, " he was like your " excellency, a mighty king, who protected the " people of the Lord."

" Ahasuerus was not the commander of Franks; " they would despise me were I to mix an igno- " ble blood with that of Meroveus: were I to " receive a consort from the priests of the " Christian God, they would reject me. You " have just heard the threats of Theodoric."

" If your excellency fear to offend the pre- " judices of the Franks; if you refuse the pious " Deuteria, niece to the bishop of Meaux, whose " personal charms, doubtless, entitle her to a " crown in this world, as do her shining virtues " to one in heaven, still may you, O king, find

"among the Romans a spouse of noble blood, "not allied to the priests of the Lord. But "forget not that your empire can be founded "only on the protection of the Most High, and "with regard to human prudence, only on the "confidence of your Gaulish subjects, who are "infinitely more numerous than your Frank "soldiers. Hear now, mighty king, the voice "of truth—that confidence you never will gain "if you take a spouse from the hands of bar-"barian kings, all of whom are either pagans, "or what is still worse, heretics. We hope the "consort you shall choose will be pleasing both "to your heart and to your eyes; but may she "be a Christian—may she be orthodox, or soon "will your throne fall as we before have seen "the throne of Attila to fall!"

"Priest," replied Clovis, "you speak only of "the Gauls that attend your temples; but there "are many others who have remained faithful "to the religion of Rome. These tell me that "the gods of the Germans and those of the "Capitol are the same, though they bear differ-"ent names. They tell me they have long been "oppressed by you; they will applaud their "liberator, if he permit them to open their "temples once more: they tell me they will serve "him with unshaken fidelity; nay, they will

" even recruit his armies; for Armorica, the
" only part of Gaul now peopled with valiant
" soldiers, is almost wholly inhabited by the
" worshippers of the ancient gods."

Severus, though present, took no share in this conversation; he fashioned his countenance so as to appear inattentive and uninterested; St. Remy had not the same power over his feelings: at various intervals, and particularly while the king was speaking, he eyed Severus with a look of mingled indignation and contempt, as though he recognized his counsels in the speech of Clovis. After a short pause he exclaimed—
" Remember this, at least, O king; among the
" orthodox there is one name more hateful than
" that of idolater; more hateful even than that
" of heretic, I mean that of apostate." Having said these words, he departed accompanied by his priests.

" I see," said Severus, with great coolness,
" that your excellency, in the study of man,
" has learnt to take advantage of the impetuous
" temper of those who approach you. Neither
" has the ferocious violence of Theodoric, nor
" the overbearing intolerance of St. Remy, been
" able to disturb the tranquillity of your soul.
" But while you moderated their fury, you duly
" appreciated the character both of themselves,

"and the bodies to which they belong. A king "can scarcely be called a king as long as he is "governed by the threats of an insolent sol- "diery; he is still less worthy of that title, when "he allows priests to rule his thoughts and ac- "tions, and to become his lawgivers. When "your excellency sees St. Remy, you can never "forget what Ambrosius was to Theodosius."

"Clovis wields the sword," replied the king, "and in proper time and place he will use it to "strike down those who resist him. Neither "Roman nor barbarian shall make me tremble "nor delay the execution of my designs; tell "that to your Gauls—but" he added, with an emotion that seemed the shuddering of terror, "it is against men I war, not against the gods— "not against the gods; them I respect, them I "fear, whether in the forests of Germany, in "the mouldering temples of Jupiter, or in the "new-built churches. Their dread power sur- "rounds us, binds us on all sides; their priests "bring us from on high orders to which "kings and nations must bow. Wherefore do "those priests wage war against each other? "Wherefore do they leave us in doubt? Let "me but understand them, and my battle-axe "shall obey the true sovereign of heaven! Let "me but know in what gods I am to believe,

"and the blood they demand shall flow on their "altars."

Severus, Felix, and the few other Romans present, remained some moments in silence. They fancied they could see the internal struggles of his rude, untutored mind, in which the spirit of fanaticism had not been extinguished either by the intrigues of politics, by the fury of war, nor even by a faith wavering between opposite creeds. They foresaw with dread that as soon as Clovis made his election he would become a persecutor; and they could not yet determine whether the persecution would be directed against themselves or against their adversaries. Severus, however, prepared to speak, wishing, apparently, to give a new impulse to his vacillating mind; but Clovis, who had for some time appeared wrapt in meditation, raised his eyes on the Romans and made a sign for them to withdraw.

CHAP. X.

RESIDENCE AT SOISSONS.

" Divine Providence hath found in you the moderator of " the age; by choosing the good side you have insured jus- " tice to all. Your faith is our victory."—*The Letter of St. Avitus, bishop of Vienne, to Clovis, on his Conversion. Apud Sirmond. Concil. Gallic. vol.* i. *p.* 153.

" AND will you really send for Julia Severa?" said Felix to Severus as they retired.

" You see I have no choice," replied he; " I " shall, however, endeavour to gain some delay. " It becomes neither the dignity of my daughter " nor my own, that she should be here awaiting " the result of such scenes as we have just wit- " nessed. Indeed I cannot at the present mo- " ment escort her hither, and it would be inde- " corous were she to travel alone, or under the " protection of any other man. I shall find an " opportunity of saying this to Clovis."

" The confidence with which she has vouch-

"safed to honour me, and your friendship, em-
"bolden me," said Felix, "to speak of that, "which, after the conversation we have just "heard, can no longer remain a secret. In the "delay and excuses with which you oppose the "eager haste of Clovis, I perceive the noble pride "of a Roman, and the tender affection of a good "father." Julius Severus frowned; Felix, however, determined not to take the hint, but at once to declare what were his feelings respecting the threatened fate of Julia.

"Yes," continued he, "as your friend, as "your guest, as a Roman senator, I will venture to tell you that the union of one of the "most illustrious daughters of Rome with a "barbarian will meet with our most decided "disapprobation. The laws which held to shame "such a marriage, though no longer in force, "are still remembered: the policy of the Cæsars "has at times caused them to be infringed by "the marriage of their own daughters, but "never has a senator followed their example."

"The empire," replied Severus, "has fallen; "the sovereignty has passed over to the barbarians, and in all ages worldly honours have "followed power."

"The Republic still lives in the heart of all "Romans; we hope it may once more flourish,

" and we should place our glory in preserving " customs worthy of the toga."

" Even should the Republic flourish again, " the daughter of Severus cannot be blamed " for following the example of the daughter of " Theodosius."

" The captive Placidia did indeed marry " Adolphus; may her example be a warning to " every Roman woman tempted to marry a bar-" barian king. The unfortunate lady saw the " six children of her husband, the issue of a " former marriage, murdered in her presence; " confounded among a crowd of vulgar captives, " she was compelled to march on foot over a " miry road above twelve miles, before the horse " of a barbarian, the assassin of her husband. " Is not the axe ever suspended over the heads " of such kings? Do not the threats of Theo-" doric we heard this very morning accord with " our experience? In the short course of my life " how many kings of the Burgundians, the Visi-" goths, the Suevi, and the Vandals, have I seen " massacred by their own relatives? Know we " not that of all these nations the Franks are " the most cruel and treacherous? Should we " not then tremble for the fate of her who shall " unite her hand with that of one of their " kings?"

" The most exalted situations are, indeed, " exposed to the greatest dangers. The life of " the Cæsars at Rome and at Constantinople " was not exposed to peril less imminent. In " these days even the most ignoble citizen is " equally insecure. Ask of the fugitives from " Chartres; ask of the exiled owners of these " palaces, what has the renouncing of ambition " availed them?"

" Ambition aspires to an exalted rank; but " he who seeks for true glory will despise the " power gained by plunder only."

" Conquest and plunder are names we give " in turn to the same things, according as we " wish to exalt or depreciate the conqueror. But " the long-haired kings, descended from Mero- " veus, are not mere soldiers of fortune; their " race is as illustrious as their achievements are " brilliant."

" With a Roman their celebrity began on the " day that the great Constantine threw their " ancestors before the wild beasts in the Circus, " amid the acclamations of the assembled mul- " titude. Heaven grant their abominable race " may end as it began!"

" No, no, with the Romans their celebrity " began by the brilliant achievements of Mello- " baudes and Arbogastes, at the head of our

"own armies. With a Frank it begins still "higher, and the songs of their bards celebrate "the numberless victories they won in the forests "of Germany."

"I see not the glory of an ancient origin, "when it presents to the mind nothing more "than the ravages and plunder of former days, "and a continued outrage on human nature."

"This hatred towards the Franks ill agrees "with the mission you have undertaken at the "court of Clovis, nay, I cannot see the ten-"dency of this impassioned language;—this "friendly advice you are pleased to give me, "on what, after all, is improbable, and even "undecided in my own mind."

Felix blushed, he felt he had gone too far, and hesitating a moment, he saw that instead of retreating, it was necessary he should advance still farther. "You are right," said he, "it was "presumption in me to give such advice, but it "cannot be presumption to plead in my own "cause for that on which my happiness depends. "I love your daughter; I even solicit your con-"sent to our union, how then can I bear a rival "in this barbarian, this enemy to my country, "to all I hold most dear?"

"Your request honours my daughter and my family" replied Severus, gravely, "and it is not

" necessary for me to say, that under any other " circumstances, I should have acceded to it " joyfully. But you see the situation I am " placed in: my estate lies on the borders of " the country invaded by the Franks; my house " has been ransacked; my cattle carried off, my " slaves dispersed, and my peasants driven away. " Clovis seems inclined to favour me; to restore " my wealth and honours, now entirely under " his controul. On the other hand, he may " instantly, if he choose, complete my downfal. " To-day motives of policy induce him to seek " for a consort among the Romans; to-morrow, " perhaps, he may wish to unite himself to the " family of one of those barbarian kings, who " share our provinces. The different factions " which have arisen in his court, reckoning on " the influence a young wife would acquire over " a man so passionately fond of women, are in-" dustriously intriguing in order to direct his " choice according to their own views. You " see, and the fact I do not deny, one of these " factions fixes on my daughter. You shall " yourself judge whether, in such a predicament, " it would be prudent in me to take upon myself " the prevention of a marriage which Clovis " must consider as a great honour done to my " family. Another in my situation would, per-

" haps, have sent for Julia, without hesitation, " that she might by her beauty dispute a throne, " which will probably be given to her who is " most pleasing in the eyes of the conqueror. I " think the respect I owe to the feelings of my " daughter compels me to act differently. I know " she has an antipathy to this union. At the " beginning of our conversation, you approved " of my conduct so far. Indeed common pru- " dence, in my opinion, will not allow me to do " more."

Felix felt embarrassed, and could not readily reply. The arguments Julius Severus had brought forward were so plausible that it was difficult even for a lover to oppose them. Yet, in the bottom of his heart he suspected, that Julius Severus was much more eagerly inclined to the alliance of his daughter with the king than he wished to appear, and that the delay he so much boasted of proceeded from his having as yet devised no convenient mode of bringing her to Soissons. Felix, however, contented himself with approving this delay as more suited to female dignity, and then quitted his host with a heart overwhelmed by grief and melancholy forebodings.

On the following days Felix had several conferences with Clovis, his secretary Aurelianus,

and St. Remy. He experienced numerous difficulties in the negotiation he had undertaken. Clovis had for some time kept up a secret correspondence with Volusianus, with Avitus, the bishop of Vienne, and with the prelates of the central part of Gaul, who were the most zealous champions of orthodoxy. He had persuaded them he was on the point of embracing their religion, and thus insured their assistance in a projected attack on the king of the Visigoths. Clovis, however, had not yet strength proportioned to the vastness of his ambition. Although Alaric the Second, the youthful son of Euric, reigning at Toulouse, was not of an age to hold the reins of government, the Visigoth lords of his council were determined to prevent Clovis from extending his dominions beyond the northern bank of the Loire. Clovis was therefore now seeking to gain time; to defer a change of religion, which might alienate the loyalty of the Franks; to avoid a public treaty with the archbishop of Tours, which would have brought upon him the vengeance of the Visigoths; to flatter the pagans of Gaul, whose secret hopes he cherished by the means of Julius Severus; in short to displease no one, promising every thing and performing nothing.

Felix fancied he could penetrate the policy of

the Frank king, and believed he had discovered the cause of the apparent inconsistency in his behaviour. Deep dissimulation appeared to be the leading feature in the character of this barbarian hero; nor was he induced to give up his opinion by the frequent paroxysms of rage to which Clovis was subject. In the midst of his most violent bursts of fury, the king of the Franks advanced steadily towards his aim, and when Felix saw him in outward appearance so entirely mastered by his passions, but in reality so skilled in doing and saying what best suited his purpose, he frequently surmised that his rage was intended to terrify, to deceive the spectators with regard to his real designs, or to serve as an excuse for the crimes his policy demanded, and which would have appeared too atrocious had they been committed in cool blood.

That which most astonished Felix in these suspected artifices, was their power to deceive old courtiers, hoary politicians, and prelates deeply versed in the arts of intrigue. The fact was, he observed and studied the man dispassionately, whereas the others were blinded by personal interest. Remy, Volusianus, Avitus, and the other bishops, thought of nothing but the triumph of orthodoxy. They judged all political events by the importance they them-

selves attached to ecclesiastical matters. Instead of suspecting that Clovis masked his real intentions, they attributed his procrastination and subterfuges to the machinations of heretics and idolaters. Suspicion of Julius Severus, which had long rankled in the breasts of the prelates, was now greatly augmented, and the letters of Volusianus to St. Remy were filled with forebodings of the dire consequences to be expected from the union of the king of the Franks with the daughter of the infidel senator of Chartres.

Another negotiation which had commenced at Soissons at the same time with that of Felix Florentius, tended greatly to increase the credit of Julius Severus, and equally to excite mistrust on the part of St. Remy and his colleagues. Joel, deputed from Armorica, had arrived with a numerous suite, composed partly of savage Osismians, the inhabitants of Cornwall, the western extremity of the Armorican peninsula; partly of emigrants from the large island of Britain, whom the conquests and devastations of the Saxons had forced from their native land. These two nations spoke the same language, professed the same religion, and preserved the same manners: and the Britons, who came with their families to seek an asylum in Armorica,

gave to that part of Gaul the name of Britany, which it still preserves.

The inhabitants of Soissons viewed with astonishment this half-wild race of men, strangers to all the refinements of social life, and addicted to no intemperance: they were always armed with long swords and poniards, which they were ever ready to use with a skill seldom found even in the best-trained soldier. Their lofty stature, their agility, their prodigious strength of body, their intrepid contempt of death, astonished the Gauls of Soissons; but at the same time flattered their pride, for these western Celts were the representatives of the race of their ancestors, and such in former days were the men who peopled Gaul, before long thraldom had debased their character.

Several of the Franks in their revels had met with the Britons who followed Joel; and the foreign barbarians had often had quarrels with those of the country, which generally ended in single combats. But the superior skill and bodily strength of the Armoricans had given them the victory in almost every one of these contests. Among barbarians bravery is, of all qualities, the one most respected, and these different combats had imprinted on the Franks

feelings of respect and affection for the Armoricans.

The negotiations Julius Severus had formerly carried on with the Armoricans brought him acquainted with all the chieftains of that country. It was to him Joel addressed himself on his arrival at Soissons, and it was through him he communicated with Clovis. Joel had come to negotiate a confederacy between the Franks and the Armoricans on a footing of perfect equality; he offered to Clovis the support of a numerous and brave army; no negotiation could be of greater importance to the Frank king, and when concluded, none contributed more to the extension of his power. Julius Severus, to whom Clovis had confided the business of tranquillizing the suspicions of the Armoricans, and demanding the necessary pledges in order to bring the treaty to a happy conclusion, was become the most important person in the court of the Franks; and St. Remy began to despair of the conversion of a monarch whom he knew he should be obliged to obey.

Clovis had seen Deuteria, niece to the bishop of Meaux, and she did not please him; he had shewn a repugnance for the other Roman maidens, who had been presented to him by the priests; but his curiosity was excited by the ab-

sence of Julia Severa, and the unwillingness of her father to bring her to the court of Soissons. He had spoken of her at different times; he had desired to see her portrait, and he appeared decided in his preference of her before all others.

Alarm now filled the minds of all the orthodox prelates of Gaul. They had for some time considered the conversion of Clovis as certain,—the only event that could render their faith triumphant. Should the king of the Franks escape them, it was to be expected that the idolatry of the Germans, and of some of the Gauls, or the Arianism of the Visigoths and the Burgundians, would become the only reigning religion. Of these two creeds it would be difficult to say which was most hated by these priests. They stood on the very brink of ruin, when fortunately St. Avitus, the archbishop of Vienne, proposed to St. Remy, the archbishop of Rheims, the union of Clovis with Clotilda, daughter to Chilperic, and niece of the Burgundian king. This last sovereign, named Gondebaud, had murdered the father of the princess; he had also condemned her brothers and sisters to a violent death. Herself he kept in exile and poverty. But in her banishment, being removed far from the presence of her uncle, she had been educated by the priests in the orthodox faith of

her father; and to the hatred of Gondebaud's Arian tenets, she added a passionate desire of revenge, fostered in her breast against the oppressor of her family. The triumph of her faith and the destruction of all infidels constituted her sole aim. Her implicit obedience to the ministers of the altar; her ardent zeal, her enthusiasm, her firm perseverance, which misfortune had not shaken, and which prosperity could not seduce, adapted her peculiarly to the views of the pontiffs, who were so anxious for the conversion of Clovis. It was asserted that her beauty was incomparable, and that the youthful conqueror, who had always shewn himself an ardent admirer of the fair sex, could not resist her charms.

She was of royal birth, a circumstance of considerable importance, inasmuch as it would flatter the pride of Clovis, and the prejudices of his Franks, who would have seen with disgust a descendant of Meroveus united with the daughter of a subject. As Clovis appeared to have some inclination for the daughter of Julius Severus, the prelates, dreading that alliance, were obliged to abandon the idea of marrying the king of the Franks to a Roman female; and they skilfully took advantage of his own prejudices and those of his soldiers, to secure a

triumph over an inclination which his precipitancy had enabled them to discover.

Clotilda was at this time kept in the estates of her uncle Gondebaud, under strict watch; indeed she was treated almost as a prisoner. Gondebaud justly feared the resentment of a niece he had so cruelly injured. He dreaded the ambition and talents of Clovis; it was not, therefore, to be supposed he would easily be brought to sanction the projected marriage. Julius Severus, on the other hand, was on the spot; and no one doubted his taking advantage of his situation, although he enveloped his deeds and designs under a most impenetrable veil of mystery. The name of Julia Severa was now never mentioned; but the prelates were prepared for her arrival at Soissons, and her immediate marriage with Clovis.

Volusianus at length informed St. Remy, by letter, that he had heard Severus was about to bring his daughter to Soissons, and that in a few days a respectable matron of Chartres would take her from Noviliacum, and accompany her on her journey. The archbishop of Rheims, seeing that Severus wished to conceal the approaching arrival of his daughter, thought he might obstruct his projects by making it known. In consequence of this the tidings reached the

ear of Felix. The intrigues of the priests had been concealed from him with almost as much caution as from Severus himself: neither had he lately heard any thing concerning the marriage of the Frank king; but as he knew Julia was still at his mother's house, he had begun to hope Severus wished in good earnest she might be forgotten by Clovis.

Julius Severus apologized to Felix for his silence on the arrangements respecting his daughter. He assured him that in so doing his sole motive was to spare him an unnecessary mortification, and that his repugnance for the match was only overcome by the express will of the king. When Felix evinced his anxious desire to quit Soissons before Julia arrived for the purpose of completing an union so hateful in his eyes, Severus instantly acceded to his wishes. By his interest at the court he hastened the removal of some difficulties which still remained, and brought the negotiations Felix had undertaken to a favourable conclusion. Clovis promised his protection to all the Roman provinces lying between the Seine and the Loire, reserving for a separate negotiation all the matters regarding the countries situate to the south of the Loire. After signing this treaty,

Felix obtained his audience of leave on the ides of October.

The next day Felix departed for Noviliacum, overwhelmed with grief. In all he had undertaken for his country he had succeeded; but he had failed in all he had attempted for himself, or for her who had thrown herself upon his protection with so much confidence. He shuddered at the fate reserved for Julia, when they should be separated for ever. He shuddered at the idea of an exaltation combined with such dreadful danger; at the idea of Julia's being subjected to a barbarous husband, whom he thought capable of the most enormous atrocities. His connection with her, it was true, had existed a few days only: communion of feeling between them had just commenced, but that first intercourse portended for futurity the most tender attachment, perhaps the most ardent affection. Various occurrences, by hurrying him to a decision, had induced him, perhaps prematurely, to speak to her of love, and to her father of marriage. He was not even certain that Julia felt more than grateful confidence towards him; he therefore anxiously desired to see her, in order to discover the true state of her affections. With regard to his future proceedings,

he wished to consult the feelings of Julia, and not his own. If she possessed sufficient courage, if she neither dreaded the power of a king, nor the anger of a father; if she felt for him somewhat more than a mere preference, both were still free, both were still the arbiters of their own destiny. But though he was prepared to venture all in her service, yet he was determined to leave the means to her decision.

CHAP. XI.

THE FEDERATES.

"The federate Frank, admitted to live under the protection of our laws, hath cultivated our fields; and all the desert tracks near Amiens, Beauvais, Troies, and Langres, have once more been clothed with verdure, under the hands of a barbarian husbandman."—*The Panegyric of Constantine by Eumenius, c.* 21.

JULIA SEVERA felt a regret for the departure of Felix from Noviliacum beyond what she even durst confess to herself. She had no doubt of his ardent zeal in the defence of the interests of his country, but she well knew that in the present unhappy state of Gaul, when not a hope of safety or of glory remained to the Romans, and when no choice was left them but of the humiliation they would submit to; a patriot might serve his country with fidelity, but not with enthusiasm: in such times the good citizen fulfilled his duty when he was compelled to appear on the theatre of politics, but did not seek for an opportunity of bringing himself forward.

Should Felix Florentius, by treating with Clovis, succeed in rescuing the defenceless cities of Gaul from the pillage and slaughter of a barbarous army, he would certainly perform an important service to his countrymen: that negotiation, however, was necessarily very unpleasant to his feelings; and as no other lord was likely to undertake a mission in which the labour would be requited by no profit, his offer had been accepted with proportionate eagerness by Volusianus. Julia, therefore, felt some pride, and still more gratitude, in the thought that it was for her and her alone Felix had ventured to face the insolent arrogance of the barbarian king, and to wrestle with him in the arts of political intrigue; that it was for her he had quitted Noviliacum, and that after having, at the pass of the Loire, saved her from death, or what was still more dreadful, from captivity, he had volunteered his services as the saviour of her fortune and the protector of her father. In him she placed her hope, her trust, for the completion of her wishes. She was certain Felix, who had prevented her becoming the captive of the barbarian, would never suffer her to become his wife.

Felix had sent letters to his mother by the different couriers despatched to the cities which

he represented at Soissons. He had given her an account of his reception by Severus, and his presentation to Clovis; but did not think himself authorised to mention Julia's impending fate. The secret belonged to her alone; and he felt no inclination to divulge it. According to the manners of the ancients, it would not have been decorous in Felix to write to Julia; he consequently had no means of clearing up the uncertainty in which her destiny had so long been enveloped.

Julia, it is true, read the letters Felix addressed to his mother; she studied them in order to discover what might lie concealed under his expressions. She remarked in them a character of melancholy depression, that ill accorded with the success which crowned his negotiation. This melancholy sometimes excited sorrowful forebodings: could she, however, attribute it to any other cause than his absence from her? Surely not, for when she consulted her own heart, she felt conscious that had she written to him, although animated by the hopes of youth, a spirit of melancholy would have pervaded her letters.

Sylvia had never spoken to Julia of the projects she had formed for Felix; never would she wound the delicacy of her feelings by hazarding

even an allusion to the subject. Her affection for her, however, appeared daily to increase; she seemed to demand in return, not the common friendship that binds the guest to his host, but that tender confidence, that filial affection, which can exist only between the wife and the mother of a beloved son. Sylvia sought in her youthful friend those qualities to which she trusted for the future happiness of her child. Perhaps had she thought of herself alone, she would not have wished for the society of a person endowed with an imagination so brilliant, feelings so delicate, and a vivacity so playful. Mature age delights in repose, and the prerogatives of youth are often irksome at this period of life; but Sylvia fancied she saw the approach of the moment when the imagination of her adopted daughter would gently transport into the regions of poesy the heart of her son, disgusted with the world; when her bosom would receive as a sacred deposit, all the silent sufferings of Felix; and when her sprightly gaiety would dissipate the clouds that hung over his soul.

On the other hand, Julia, who had long since been bereft of her mother, and who had never experienced the delights of filial love mingled with so much respect, yielded to her feelings with enthusiasm; she sought in Sylvia all the features

which resembled Felix: in the mother she was delighted with what she durst not confess to herself she adored in the son. Notwithstanding the difference in age and sex, she fancied she could discover the same physiognomy in both: in both were found the same dignity united with mildness, the same fire in the eye, the same smile playing on the lips, and more than all did she admire the similarity in the inflection of their voices; the familiar expressions she had heard from the mouth of Felix, and Felix alone, would at times, when uttered by his mother, cause her heart to thrill with joy.

She sometimes spoke to Sylvia about Felix, although with much timidity; but Sylvia felt such pleasure in talking of her son, he was so entirely the pride of her old age, the consolation of her heart, that little artifice was required to turn the conversation on her favourite subject. Julia, therefore, soon learnt all she wished to know, but durst not ask, touching his earliest education, the habits of his infancy, the inclinations of his youth, or the first sparks of sentiment which shone forth in his mind.

With these two friends at Noviliacum, time glided gently by. They found daily new resources in each other's mind; and the character of both, as it developed itself, appeared in a

more favourable light. The two old tutors of Felix, Martin and Eudoxus, who shared their solitude, did not gain so much by more intimate acquaintance. They never shewed their real character without exciting a feeling of disgust; but their minds were cultivated, and communicated a sort of spring to conversation.

Both were very learned; both were very convenient for consultation on a variety of subjects; when their self-love was flattered and they were allowed to take their own course, without contradiction or restraint, some advantage might be derived from their conversation. Sylvia, who justly appreciated the character of these two persons, took care to keep them at a proper distance, although she treated them as a part of her family. She made use of Eudoxus as an excellent dictionary, as a learned but tedious book, which she was glad to have the power of opening when she chose, but which also it was highly necessary to know when to shut, for his awkward pedantry was rather irritating than irksome to her feelings. Martin, who was much less eager to make a display of his learning, and who, perhaps, was rather less vain, but more haughty and arrogant, did not, like Eudoxus, grate the feelings of those he wished to flatter, but only of those he wished to dis-

please, and unfortunately this very frequently occurred.

Martin alone remained insensible to the fascinating manners and demeanour of Julia; nay, he seemed to have taken a dislike to her, which daily increased in spite of the efforts made by the daughter of Severus to gain his good will. In his frequent invectives against philosophers, those men whose minds were corrupted by profane literature, against the idolaters and the infidels, he now appeared to have more than Eudoxus in view: it might have been imagined that his aim was either to mortify Julia, or indirectly to wound her feelings. Sylvia was astonished at this antipathy, but as she had observed Julia in the intimacy of domestic life, and found her religious opinions harmonizing with her own more than those of Martin, she put no question to the priest on the subject, but contented herself with sometimes interposing to repress the acrimony of his zeal.

Julia passed the finest part of the autumn at Noviliacum. Whatever may be the calamities with which the madness of man overwhelms his fellow creatures, the beauties of nature are ever the same at the same seasons of the year; the banks of the Loire, though but lately ravaged by the barbarians, were still a most delightful

residence. The forests did not appear less majestic, nor the verdure of the meads less beauteous, nor the tints of the falling leaves less varied; the streams were not less pure, and the clouds which, in the morning, fled before the sun, or, in the evening, rolled along the western horizon, were not less brilliant in their golden splendour.

The flocks re-crossing the Loire to return to their pastures, whence they had been driven so precipitately by the shepherds, at the approach of the Franks, seemed cheered by the brilliancy of the unclouded sun; they knew not the danger to which they had been exposed, nor that which still threatened them; they saw the present moment only, and gladly answered the call of nature which invited them to joy. The peasants had just finished their vintage, the crop was abundant, and the must which consequently appeared on their board in greater profusion than usual, contributed to drown their cares, and to cause them for once to participate in that cheerfulness which the fine days of autumn never fail to produce throughout the whole range of animal life.

The two friends passed several of these delightful days in visiting the neighbourhood of Noviliacum, and the villages and hamlets comprised in the district of Interamnes. Sylvia felt

pleasure in shewing to Julia an estate of which she hoped one day to see her the mistress. But even had not that motive existed, Sylvia would have considered herself obliged, by the laws of hospitality, to shew any intelligent guest, who might reside under her roof, the many enchanting landscapes which the banks of the Loire presented; the many races, different in manners and customs, dwelling on the large estate of Felix, and the numerous ruins in the neighbourhood, so worthy of curiosity, being the monuments of ancient civilization and religion.

Nothing so much attracted the curiosity of Julia, as the vast ruins of Hesodunum, situate on the northern bank of the Loire, two leagues below Noviliacum. From the castle terrace the towers of Hesodunum were seen sketched in the horizon; the sun set behind the vast buildings, which then took a darker tint, while the sky and land seemed blazing in gold around. As the day fell they augmented to the eye, and seemed to rise in all the majesty of past ages, such as they were at the time the Carnuti and the Turonians disputed their possession; or when the Druids, in their subterraneous caves, held mysterious councils. These remains of a considerable town, which now could not reckon one single inhabitant; these monuments of an-

cient events, of which the memory was not entirely effaced in the province, although they had found no place in the general records of Gaul; the superstitious terror which seemed to be still attached by the people to the dwellings of the sanguinary gods, whose worship was long since abandoned, had often been an object of Julia's questions and Eudoxus' learned dissertations. One whole day was to be passed in visiting Hesodunum; but various domestic incidents had compelled them to defer this long-projected expedition almost to the time when Sylvia expected the return of Felix Florentius.

Meanwhile the two friends visited the banks of the Cher, as they had done those of the Loire. They extended their excursions to the camp of the federates, which presented to them a softened picture of those hordes of barbarians,—those Franks,—among whom Felix, the man who of all others interested them most deeply, was now residing. The camp of the federates was originally formed for fifty veteran barbarians, who had been enriched and half civilized in the Roman armies. Many had already found in the bosom of their family that death they had so often dared in battle; but their wives and their children had inherited their property; their neighbours undertook to

cultivate their fields until the sons of their ancient comrades in arms should be able to provide for the support of their families, so that the colony was apparently in a flourishing state.

It would not have been possible for females to go from Noviliacum to the camp of the federates, and return the same day, without experiencing considerable fatigue, particularly as it was their intention to visit the banks of the Cher in their most romantic points, and to examine minutely the small military colony appointed for their defence. Sylvia, therefore, ordered apartments to be prepared for their reception in an ancient pleasure-house or villa, near the federate camp, which formerly was the residence of a person whose estate had long since been added to that of Florentius. From the name of its ancient proprietor, it was called the castle of Rutilianus. The situation was more wild but less picturesque than that of Noviliacum. It was placed on a rugged hillock between the Cher and a torrent which flowed into the river: two sides of the walls were built upon perpendicular rocks washed by the stream. Some steps hewn in the rock communicated by narrow dark passages to the small harbour where the boats were kept. This was the shortest road to the camp of the federates,

situated on the other side of the torrent, crowning the opposite hillock.

But few durst take advantage of this communication, unless in broad day. More than once it was said lights had been seen about midnight, at the openings which admitted air into the subterraneous passages. The barbarian soldiers, who had brought with them into Gaul their northern superstitions, unknown among the Romans, attributed these lights to supernatural beings. The whole of the castle was by them suspected to be the habitation of mischievous spirits. Thirty years since the former proprietor, Marcus Rutilianus, had been slain, with all his family, by a party of Vandals: his soul, however, would have remained, they said, at peace in its sepulchre, like those of so many others that had fallen under the sword of the enemy, had not domestic treachery been the cause of his destruction. His brother Paulus, according to common report, aided by the wife of Marcus, who loved him, and hoping at the death of his elder brother to inherit his estate, had invited the Vandals, who were ravaging the opposite bank of the Cher, to cross that river: he went for them with his brother's boats; he opened the secret stairs by which, at midnight, he introduced them into the castle, where the

family were sleeping, unconscious of danger; but the Vandals, profiting by the treachery, yet detesting the traitors, slew Paulus and the faithless spouse who shewed them the pass, as well as all the rest of the family of Rutilianus.

To answer in some measure the purposes of expiation, a small chapel, or oratory, had been erected at the foot of the hill, where Paulus had introduced the Vandals into the castle. Its religious services were performed by the priests of St. Martin of Tours, who, on days of great solemnity, came to celebrate mass: thence they could enter the subterraneous passages to expel the demons; but they seldom visited the oratory, and it was supposed still more rarely these subterraneous passages.

On the opposite side the front of the castle commanded an extensive plain, bounded by ancient forests, whose solitary recesses and deep shades excited feelings of a melancholy and awful nature. On the arrival of Sylvia and her young guest, the federates assembled on this plain to honour their benefactress by a festival accompanied with warlike exercises. Sylvia Numantia and the father of Felix had erected convenient dwellings for the veterans; they had given them cattle, grain, and instruments of tillage, and had insured to them a comfortable old

age. The small military colony in return undertook to defend the pass of the Cher, and thus provide for the safety of the whole district of Interamnes. These hoary soldiers seized, therefore, with eagerness, an opportunity of proving to their mistress that they were prepared to perform their duty.

Sylvia had promised prizes to all who should distinguish themselves in these warlike sports, and the plain in front of the castle, on which were assembled all the federates and their families, with several shepherds, hunters, and peasants of the neighbourhood, was, from mid-day to sunset, the theatre of successive mock-combats. The first to try their strength were the sons of the veterans, whom, according to the laws of the empire, the fathers were obliged to instruct in the management of arms. Next came the old soldiers themselves: although their silver locks and their sun-burnt skin, marked the long hardships they had braved, and though many of them were already bent by age, they seemed to recover the vigour of youth when they grasped their ancient weapons. The habitual precision of their movements supplied the place of wasted strength: they darted the javelin to a greater distance, and wielded the battleaxe with greater skill than their sons and pupils whom they had

instructed; and when, to end the sports, a furious bull was driven into the meadow, and pursued by mastiffs of the strongest breed, a veteran awaited his approach without shrinking, and felled him by a single blow.

The women, in their turn, wished to display their skill in military exercise. They were for the most part amazons, who had followed the camp with their husbands for many years, who were accustomed to share with them all hardships and dangers, and who seemed, in truth, better fitted to that wandering and perilous mode of life, than to the enjoyment of domestic happiness. Their lofty stature, their daring step, their bold motions, their rough voice, and the sharp features of their face, might have induced a belief they did not belong to the sex whose garments they wore. After having shewn they could handle the lance and the buckler, the battleaxe and the falchion of their husbands, they contended in the hurling of stones. The first prize was proposed for her who should strike a mark at the distance of two hundred paces: this was the trial of skill. The second prize was to be given to the strongest: a discus of stone, weighing five and twenty pounds, was placed in the hands of the competitors, and she who could heave it to the greatest distance was

to be crowned. Radbode, the matron of the castle, who was the widow of one of the most distinguished soldiers of the little colony, won both prizes; and the veterans, who applauded these different trials of strength and skill, all asserted that the courage of Radbode was equal to that of the most valiant soldier, and the strength of her arm equal to the most robust.

With the federates the day ended by a feast spread in the hall of the castle of Rutilianus. Wine was not spared, and their ancient military ballads, composed in the Teutonic and Latin languages, or in a dialect formed by a mixture of both, were sung during the greater part of the evening. It was near midnight when most of them retired. Radbode, however, invited a certain number of the old soldiers to pass the night at the castle, to supply, in case of need, as she pretended, the place of the numerous train of domestics who usually attended on Sylvia, and who could not be found in this castle, which was generally uninhabited.

CHAP. XII.

GOTHIC SUPERSTITIONS.

"In the eighth year of his episcopal dignity, as one night "he lay asleep, after having visited his diocese and the "castles of the church, St. Tetricus appeared to him with "a threatening countenance: WHAT DOST THOU HERE, PAPPOLUS? said he to him. WHEREFORE DOST THOU POLLUTE "MY SEAT? WHEREFORE DOST THOU INVADE MY CHURCH? "WHEREFORE DOST THOU LEAD ASTRAY THE FLOCK THAT WAS "CONFIDED UNTO ME? AVAUNT! YIELD THY PLACE UNTO "ANOTHER. Saying these words he smote him with violence "on the breast with a truncheon he held in his hand. "Pappolus awoke, and felt severe pain in that part of his "body; in his anguish he loathed all food—the third day "he expired, vomiting streams of black gore."—*Gregory of Tours, lib.* v. *cap.* v. *p.* 236.

THE two Roman ladies were surprised at the strength, skill, and agility of Radbode, and still more so at the interest she seemed to excite among the companions in arms of her husband, who, with much warmth, expressed their high opinion of her valour and address. "She is," said Sylvia, "such a woman as we rarely meet

" with; since I have given her a confidential " situation in this mansion, I have had several " proofs of her prudence, her judgment, and " her integrity. The senator Florentius, who " was very fond of her husband, had several " opportunities of knowing her merit; and " when I had the misfortune to lose him, Rad-" bode evinced feelings which I should not have " suspected she possessed, either from her out-" ward appearance or the life she had led."

These words stimulated the curiosity of Julia, and as the intention of their short excursion was to observe and examine this barbarian colony, living under Felix's protection, at a time when men of the same origin, having the same habits of life, and speaking the same tongue, were on the point of becoming their masters, they called Radbode, and amused themselves with putting various questions to her.

Radbode and her husband were born among the Franks in Toxandria; she was now past her fiftieth year; she had hardly reached her eighteenth when she accompanied her husband to the army levied by the Emperor Majorian, for the purpose of waging war in Africa. Since that time she had followed him to the field for twenty years, both in Italy and Gaul: never did she quit his side, even in the most bloody en-

gagements; she had braved death under its most hideous forms—sometimes exposed to the enemy's sword—sometimes shut up in military hospitals, amid the ravages of contagious fever. She had often dealt out to the enemy that death she loved to face; for her skill in handling the sabre and the battleaxe had not been confined to the mere sport of a mock-fight. Not less ardent in the battle than the soldier whose hardships and dangers she shared, she darted on the foe with irresistible impetuosity; she dealt her blows with fury, and she boasted of the number of Alans, Visigoths, and Germans she had felled with her battleaxe. On more than one occasion she had slain the antagonist of her sinking husband; once she had rendered the same service to Fulvius Florentius; and in gratitude for that deliverance, when Radbode's husband was killed, about twelve years since, Sylvia placed her in the castle of Rutilianus, entrusting to her the care of that estate, and the management of those who tilled it.

After speaking to her of her campaigns and warlike exploits, and hearing several interesting anecdotes of the different Roman and barbarian generals, who in her time had headed the armies of the empire, Julia asked her how she liked her present solitary and retired situation.

"Thanks to the kindness of the most munificent Sylvia," answered she, "I should be happy could I divest myself of fear."

"Fear, did you say!" exclaimed the two ladies with astonishment, "we had believed that feeling unknown to you."

"Radbode fears nought that can die," replied she, "but what avails courage against that which is already dead?"

"I am still at a loss," said Julia, "to know how fear can be inspired by that which is dead, and has therefore ceased to act?"

"I know not," said Radbode, "whether the Romans fancy our existence ends with death, or that the gates of the tomb can never be unfolded to the souls of the unfortunate; but I know full well that we Germans have often seen the shade of the dead rise from his sepulchre and return to the earth to call for vengeance. Woe to him who meets that spirit, for it is in misery, and misery it wishes to produce. Pity dies with humanity, and the shade of the most beneficent among men returns to the world with a desire of committing evil: its look freezes the blood; its breath sends death to the heart; if it speak to you it is to betray; if it advise you, it is to destroy."

"But," replied Sylvia, "you who have so

" often slept on the battle-field, did you ever see
" the spirits of the dead arise to demand retri-
" bution for the blood you yourself had shed?"

" No, they who fall sword in hand in the
" strife of battle, suffer no more; they complain
" not, neither have they cause; but when trea-
" chery has encompassed them; when they fall
" before domestic perfidy, like the wretched
" Marcus Rutilianus—"

" Many years have passed since Rutilianus
" died; you never knew either him or his fa-
" mily; they cannot foster resentment against
" you. He who caused their death perished
" with them. He reaped not the fruit of his
" crime, neither did he transmit it to his heirs:
" why then should the tomb open for one who
" has no justice to demand, no secret to di-
" vulge?"

" I know not, but spirits are not masters of
" their actions as are the living; they never ap-
" pear but in the murk of night, they are as it
" were chained down to one spot; they fear the
" eye of the inquisitive, and at the approach of
" many they retire. Rutilianus has, doubtless,
" some mystery to unfold, for his spirit walks.
" Perhaps as all here are of barbarian origin,
" he awaits to address a Roman; perhaps this
" night will he tell to you, Sylvia, or to you,

" Julia, what he will not divulge to Radbode. " Was he not the friend of Julius Severus; and " is it not possible he expects from him a re- " venge that has hitherto been refused?"

There is something so contagious in supersti- tion that although these northern terrors were unknown to the two Roman ladies, they invo- luntarily shuddered at the idea that the spirit awaited their coming.

" But," said Sylvia, " you say the spirit of " Rutilianus haunts the castle—have you ever " seen it?"

" Often have I seen as clearly as I now see " you, his light mount and descend the steps of " the Cher, nor am I the only one who has seen " it: in the whole camp of the federates there is " not perhaps one individual who has not seen " it as well as myself. Often have I heard him " in this very apartment."—It was the room destined for Julia.——" I could not be mis- " taken, for I sleep below and the shepherd " sleeps above, and we both heard him at the " same time."

" The noise and the light might have pro- " ceeded from human beings. Have you seen " anything supernatural?"

" All here is supernatural. On every side " are you exposed to meet the ghosts of Ruti- " lianus and his hapless family. But generally

"it is in the distance that the shades appear: "they wrap themselves in gloom. See this "hand," said she, uncovering a vigorous arm, which more resembled that of a soldier than a woman's. "This hand once seized an eagle "which the Gepidi had snatched from our sol-"diers, and brought it back in triumph to our "cohort. Well! that hand trembles like the "leaf, when, in a winter's night, I see from these "windows, before yon forest, the Vandals, white "as snow, dismount from their milk-white steeds. "Among them stands Rutilianus with his six "children; he is wounded, transfixed by a long "Vandal javelin. But he intreats, he craves "mercy, not for himself but for his children. "The barbarians mock his griefs; they feign to "yield to his intreaties, and when he extends "his arms to give one last embrace to his son, "whom he thinks they permit to live—that "son's head rolls on the snow. Another is "suspended from the branch of an oak—another "is crushed under the hoofs of the horses. Ru-"tilianus covers with his body, the last and the "youngest; instantly are ten lances couched "against them, and the body of the son is "pierced with that of the father."

"But where—when—how—did you see this "dreadful sight?"

"Yonder," replied Radbode, opening the

window, and shewing the edge of the wood about five hundred paces distant. "Yonder "was the murder committed, two hours after "midnight, on the day of the ides of December, and yonder every year, for the twelve "that I have inhabited this spot, on the ides of "December is the same scene represented by "supernatural beings."

"The spot you point to is very distant," observed Julia, "and in the darkness of night your "imagination had, doubtless, a greater share "than your sight in representing to you this "horrid tragedy."

"All the murders were not committed so far "off," replied Radbode, "in the large hall, "where you now hear the resounding shouts of "joy, Paulus and Damia, the brother and faithless spouse of Rutilianus ended that same "night their guilty lives. More than once, crossing that hall at one of the extremities, have I "seen those two wretches bound to the two posts "of the door; their hands were tied behind them; "the gore trickled from their throats, their arms, "their breasts; they were reproaching each "other's treachery, and the shameful death that "awaited both, as soon as the blood of their "veins should be exhausted."

Sylvia, perceiving that Julia turned pale at this

description, observed to her that the architrave of the door Radbode had spoken of, was supported by two Cariatides, which, in her terror, her imagination had probably pourtrayed as covered with blood.

Eudoxus and Martin were not present at this conversation. The one was in the great hall, presiding at the feast of the soldiers; the other was reading his breviary. When they entered, they were struck with the appearance of fear and anxiety impressed on the countenances of the two Roman ladies. They related the tales of Radbode, who in part repeated them, adding some new circumstances. Sylvia well knew she could not rely on the courage of either, for protection in case of real danger; but she expected from their wisdom a support which she felt necessary both for herself and her friend. The horrid crimes these walls had witnessed filled her with a dread she had, till now, been a stranger to; she felt she had not strength to resist a fear which had communicated itself to a woman of Radbode's courage. She had, however, always regarded tales of this nature as vulgar errors, to which she rarely attended, and she relied on these two learned men for a demonstration of their falsehood.

Eudoxus, indeed, though he grew pale with

fear, when he heard Radbode's dreadful tale, could not bring himself to believe that the spirit of Rutilianus was still an inhabitant of the castle, or that it returned from the tomb with the power of committing mischief. He recalled to his memory what he had seen in the classic authors on the subject of spirits and phantoms. He was aware the belief in them was not entirely unknown to the ancients, but the allusions to it were so rare, so completely unconnected with historical record, that he placed it in the number of the most contemptible of popular prejudices, introduced among civilized people, by their communication with barbarian slaves. He was, therefore, rather inclined to attribute the sounds and lights Radbode spoke of, to men of flesh and bone, to men whose evil designs were to be feared. He intreated Sylvia to take all the measures which during the night might insure the safety of herself, for he durst not speak of his own person: he begged of her to keep in the castle all the veterans who were still at table, and when Radbode assured him there was not one among them who would dare face an apparition, he suggested the propriety of placing in the corridors those fierce mastiffs who had in the afternoon attacked the furious bull, and whose courage, unlike that of the federates,

could not be damped by tales of ghosts and goblins.

Martin drew from these stories an opposite conclusion; he saw in the spectres a new proof of the immortality of the soul, and its punishment in the life to come. He was angry at the incredulity of those who doubted the existence of disembodied spirits. To him a prodigy was ever more probable than a natural event; the gods and the demons, the souls of the saints and of the damned, in his opinion, all held communication with men; and instead of using human means of defence against the spirits of the castle he proposed to resist them by exorcisms; then, he asserted, there would no longer be any fear, except for the infidels and those who had not a pure and spotless conscience.

The alarm spread among the guests in the castle, in spite of this assurance, which Eudoxus took to himself as an indirect threat, rather than as an argument to tranquillize his fears. Julia and Sylvia, without attempting to reason on the subject of their apprehensions, were more terrified than they ventured to avow. All they had done to spirit up their courage; all the counsels they had asked, had served only to augment their fears. They resolved, however, to use the precautions re-

commended by Eudoxus, and to prepare for defence, as though they were threatened with an immediate attack. First, they wished to close the communication between the galleries of the castle and the steps leading to the Cher: but that was impossible; the doors had fallen with old age and had never been repaired; the locks were out of order, and none of the fastenings had resisted the ravages of mould and humidity during thirty years of neglect; all in the mansion bore visible marks of the long absence of the owner.

Eudoxus, after reconnoitring the place with Radbode, proposed that a guard should be set in the vestibule to which the steps of the Cher led, and whence there was a communication to the different galleries. Some of the veterans, after great persuasion, promised to pass the night there with torches; but they intreated Martin first to sprinkle the room with holy water. The mastiffs were at the same time unchained and allowed to prowl on the ground floor of the castle. The travellers, after promising they would listen with attention, call at the least noise, and come to the assistance of each other, retired to their separate apartments, feeling less astonishment at the fear of Radbode, than at the courage with which she persisted in her

resolution of inhabiting a lonely mansion, in which they did not think themselves safe for one night with a guard of twenty men.

It must be observed however, the imagination of these twenty men was alarmed by the precautions they saw the guests take. They were placed on guard at two different posts; one half only was to remain in the large hall, underneath the apartments and near the principal gate; the other was posted in the vestibule to which the steps of the Cher led; they all promised to patrole hourly in the corridors. But these very preparations made them believe there was some particular danger to be feared that night. While on the watch they began to tell each other tales of the different apparitions for which this castle was noted miles around, and thus confirmed each other in the expectation of something extraordinary. These tales they often interrupted, either to cast a look of fearful anxiety on the long passages opening on the vestibule, and over which their torches scattered a glimmering light, or to listen to the distant hollow sounds they sometimes fancied they could hear on the stairs leading to the river. One of the federates on guard in the vestibule complained of cold and wet, and all his companions, although not much in the habit of caring for the weather,

immediately acceded to the proposal of joining their friends who were keeping watch in the hall.

In the morning when Sylvia met Julia in her apartment, expecting to laugh with her over the vain terrors of the night, she was astonished at her pale and haggard countenance. " For hea-" ven's sake tell me, my dear, what ails you?" said she to Julia. " Nothing I hope," answered Julia, " more than the fatigue of a restless night, " and the agitation of horrid dreams. Even " now I can hardly think but there was some-" thing real in what seemed so perfectly repre-" sented to my eyes." At the same time she searched and desired her friend to search with her, in order to ascertain if any trace remained of a nocturnal visit to her apartment. Not being able to discover any thing that might confirm her suspicions, they went out together, and Julia felt sufficient courage to describe her dream, when she had been cheered by the rays of the sun and the freshness of the morning breeze, but not before.

" The more I endeavour to collect my ideas," said she, " the more I am struck with the con-" trast between the other unconnected dreams " of this horrid night, and one vision which in-" terrupted them, so striking that I cannot dis-" tinguish it from reality. I saw Rutilianus and

" the slaughter of his children. I saw the scenes " Radbode described, and others yet more hor- " rid. Alarmed I awoke; then again I sunk into " sleep, but still the same images haunted me: " I perceived that my blood was inflamed by " fever, and I could no longer decide whether " I was asleep or awake. Suddenly the whole " castle appeared on fire; I felt the smoke stifle " my breath, the flame swept my face. I opened " my eyes, a man wrapt in the long frock of a " penitent held a torch close to my head and ex- " amined my features with attention. *It is surely* " *her*, said he to another man, concealed under " a similar habit, who was standing at the door, " and holding a third frock. *Julia Severa*, said " the first, *in the name of all the saints who reign* " *in heaven; in the name of St. Denis, of St.* " *Germain, of St. Martin of Tours arise;—quit* " *the vain pomps of the world, renounce thy fool-* " *ish hopes, take the garb of penance and fol-* " *low us.* He had not finished speaking when " the mastiffs were heard to bark with fury at " the bottom of the castle. His companion, who " was watching at the door, beckoned to him; " instantly the former extinguished his torch, " every thing was now hidden in deep darkness, " and I heard no sounds save the baying of the " dogs, which did not cease during the whole " night to renew my terrors."

CHAP. XIII.

LETTERS FROM SOISSONS.

"The Franks not being able to succeed by force, proposed "an alliance, which the Armoricans willingly accepted. They "united in one nation, which became very powerful. The "Roman soldiers who were stationed in the other parts of "Gaul, rather than submit to the Arians (Visigoths), also "joined the Franks and gave up to them the provinces they "occupied."—*Procopius de Bello Gothico, lib.* i. *cap.* 12. *p.* 341.

A FINE autumn sun shone on the ancient mansion of Rutilianus; the woods which bounded the meadow had scarcely begun to lose their leaves; but already the varied tints, the yellow, the orange, the purple, had succeeded to the summer's green. Numerous flocks were scattered over the more distant meads, and on the opposite bank of the Cher. The shepherds, who had brought their milk to the castle for the breakfast of the travellers, were standing before the portal; the huntsmen were calling their dogs, and Sylvia's slaves were harnessing the mules of

her litter, and saddling the horses of the other travellers. As far as the eye could reach, all around them was life and motion. Julia, however, was thoughtful and uneasy; notwithstanding the pleasure she had felt by the gratification of her curiosity in the camp of the federates, in the conversation of Radbode, and the tragic history of Rutilianus, as soon as the signal for departure was given she eagerly quitted the borders of the Cher, feeling no desire to visit them again.

Sylvia's litter had two seats; but Julia gave up to Martin the one which was offered to her: she preferred riding on horseback, hoping that exercise, and a change of scene, would efface the painful recollections of the preceding night. Eudoxus, who was also on horseback, rode by her side. "We may now exclaim with Propertius," said he,

> "Sunt aliquid manes: lethum non omnia finit;
> "Luridaque evictos effugit umbra rogos."

"*The manes are indeed something, and death* "*doth not end all, for the pallid shade escapes* "*triumphant from the pyre.*"

"You do then begin to believe," said Julia, "that the terrors, which we yesterday attri-

" buted to superstition, are indeed founded on
" reality?"

" I certainly never regarded the seventh
" elegy of the fourth book of Propertius as an
" irrefragable proof of that opinion. With him
" it is only a poetic licence; in bringing for-
" ward Cynthia's shade he strikes the imagina-
" tion in a more forcible manner."

" I never wish to have my imagination struck
" so forcibly again," said Julia; " but yet I
" should like to know if what I saw was a
" dream, or something real."

Eudoxus in reply, spoke to her of the gates of horn and ivory, through which, according to Virgil, true and false dreams are despatched to mortals; he spoke to her of the ὀνειροπόλοι, or interpreters of dreams, and the different rules of their art; in short, he brought forward all that his knowledge of antiquity could furnish him with on the subject. But that was not what Julia wanted; and after some vain attempts to bring him to the consideration of what caused her uneasiness, and discovering by his answer to an unexpected question on her part, that Eudoxus had not passed the night in his chamber, but had gone down to the hall, where he slept in his cloak, she ceased keeping up the

conversation by fresh questions, and yielded to her own reflections.

The more she thought of the apparition she fancied she had seen, the less could she bring herself to believe that it was not real. All the other dreams which had agitated her mind presented themselves to her memory with that confusion of impossible and contradictory circumstances, which our imagination admits, during sleep, without reluctance, and which serve afterwards to distinguish the phantoms of the brain from reality. But the penitent who had spoken to her appeared ever present to her mind; the sound of his voice was still ringing in her ears: that short vision was neither connected with what preceded, nor with what followed: it responded to no idea she had before in her imagination; it presented no sense she could clearly comprehend; but it remained in her memory, never to be cancelled, mingling with nothing vague, admitting no doubt, and needing the addition of no circumstance for its intelligibility.

The road from the camp of the federates to Noviliacum crossed a country almost desert, and for the greater part sterile. The landscape owed all its beauties to the rich tints of autumn, otherwise it presented no object worthy of at-

tention. No villages were to be seen where the husbandmen combined to repel the beasts of the forest, and procure the comforts of life; no lone house was visible where a single family supported itself by its own labour and economy. In the distance the traveller heard neither the crow of the cock, nor the baying of the house-dog, nor the bleatings of the sheep. Some footsteps of horses and oxen were printed on the dust; but they belonged to the half-wild herds which wandered in full liberty, unaccompanied by the pastor. In the neighbourhood of the Cher, some vineyards and arable fields were seen; but as the traveller retired from the banks, these monuments of the labour of man became gradually more rare, and at length entirely disappeared.

Crossing these wilds, Julia and Sylvia overtook a troop of beggars, who formed a sort of caravan, which was travelling from Bourges to Tours. Five or six asses, laden with panniers, were at the head; some of these panniers were filled with the utensils and baggage of the mendicants; in others were seen their children standing upright, and raising their little heads above the hampers to peep at the road. The fathers and mothers followed them with sticks in their hands. They carried with them mira-

culous images, crosses that had been blessed, and rags that had lain four and twenty hours on the shrine of St. Stephen of Bourges, or St. Martin of Tours. This was the coin with which they paid the charity of the good devout women, when they could not pass in a day from one convent to another, and thus rely entirely on the hospitality of the monks. They asked charity of the travellers; and after they had received some alms, they detained for a long time the slave who was with the baggage, putting various questions to him concerning the names and rank of the two Roman ladies, and their suite; the object of their journey, and their future projects. Eudoxus, who heard a part of this conversation, called back the slave with impatience. "I distrust that rabble," said he to Julia, "they are spies of the monks, who encou-"rage them in idleness, and give them food. "By their means all we do in our houses is "known in the convents; even a register is "kept of our thoughts; and thus those who "make a vow to renounce the world, now hold "the world in subjection."

The mendicants soon after continued their way towards the west, on a sort of high road; while the travellers, turning northward in the direction of the Loire, crossed the wilds of

Sologne, without meeting a living soul until they arrived at Noviliacum.

Some letters were awaiting their arrival at the castle; these diverted the recollections of their journey, and brought their attention from the past to the future. Severus wrote to Sylvia, thanking her for the generous hospitality she had shewn his daughter, and informing her that Julia would now cease to trespass on her kindness; he said he wished to have his daughter near him, and had therefore commissioned a matron, who would soon arrive at Noviliacum, to take care of her and accompany her on the journey.

Another letter of Julius Severus, addressed to his daughter, was couched in the following terms:

" My dear daughter: the time is come when " I can no longer refrain from calling you to my " presence, that I may again press you to my " bosom. It would be indecorous both in you " and me, were you to sojourn longer at the " house of persons who have received you with " a tenderness I shall ever with gratitude recol- " lect. Felix Florentius is about to return to " Noviliacum; you could no longer with pro- " priety remain under the same roof with him, " for he has conceived the project of an alliance " with our family, which, although most honour-

"able, by no means suits our present circum-
"stances. Prepare, dear daughter, for a more
"glorious union; for more power, for more
"wealth than a Roman senator can give you.
"It was not an illusion that seduced the
"priestess, when, standing on the sacred tripod,
"she foretold that by you the Roman should
"be reconciled to the barbarian, and that the
"diadem of the Frank king should gird your
"forehead. To whatever power Lamia may
"have been indebted for her foreknowledge,
"her eyes certainly saw your destiny as plainly
"as ours see present objects. It is the express
"order of Clovis that summons you to Soissons
"to make you his bride. By Clovis' order the
"matron Sulpitia will quit Chartres on the day
"of the ides of October, to accompany you;
"and a body of Franks will advance to that
"town in order to escort you in safety: as soon
"as Sulpitia shall arrive, I desire you will in-
"stantly depart. If you can, without offend-
"ing the family of which you are now an in-
"mate, avoid meeting Felix Florentius, who
"departs about the same time from this place.
"I feel confident that my daughter, when raised
"to higher dignity, will never be wanting in
"gratitude towards a family that has shewn her
"so much kindness; but she would still more

" be wanting in gratitude—in gratitude towards " her father—were she not to favour, with all " her might, a project to which I have not hesi- " tated to sacrifice both my inclination and my " interest!"

The same courier brought the following letter from Felix Florentius to his mother:

" *Felix Florentius to the most illustrious and the* " *most excellent lady, Sylvia Numantia, his mo-* " *ther,* GREETING :

" I return to you, my dear mother, with the " strongest conviction I ever yet experienced of " the want of your maternal tenderness, your " advice, your generous assistance. I deceived " myself when I fancied I was adapted for a " public situation. I felt nothing but disgust " when I came in close union with those called " great men, and my indignation was excited " when I discovered the pitiful and sordid mo- " tives which led them to decide on the fate of " nations. The negotiation with which I was " intrusted has been successful, and the country " between the Seine and the Loire will hence- " forth be safe from the ravages of the Franks; " and it is unnecessary for us who live south- " ward of the Loire even to form an alliance " with those barbarians. But can a Roman

" deem it a success to have put his hand to a " treaty which seals the slavery of the Romans " to the barbarians? Can he deem it a success " to have prevailed on a haughty master to ac- " cept the cowardly tender we have made of our " liberty, of our laws, nay, of the very name " our ancestors bore? I shall feel some pleasure " in my success if I have, indeed, saved my de- " fenceless countrymen from the sword of the " barbarians; but my heart reproaches me with " having contributed to the greatness of the " enemies of Rome, to the greatness of the fu- " ture oppressors of Gaul. The Franks, whose " cruelty rendered them before so dreadful, will " become still more so by the extent of their " dominion. The Armoricans have united with " them, our own soldiers have joined their " standard, and those we but yesterday re- " garded as a handful of adventurers, now give " laws to one-fourth of ancient Gaul. Shud- " dering at the idea of having injured my coun- " try where I hoped to serve it, I wish to with- " draw from public life; never more to enter " the hateful audience-hall of Clovis; never " more to hear the hoarse accents of that bar- " barian. Happy were I never to turn my " steps from Noviliacum, but there pass my life " amid domestic ties, occupied only with the

"love of my mother, and of one whom I "thought a friend; one whom I preferred to "every thing in this world, and from whom "alone I would seek hope, consolation, and "happiness. With her I might forget all that "passes beyond our two rivers, see none but her "in the world, and expect from her alone those "generous emotions we can no longer seek "either in the pursuit of glory or in the service of "our country. But that happiness is also denied "me: the sword of the barbarian has smitten "our eagles; his jargon corrupts our language; "his laws annihilate our laws; his name even "replaces the august name of Rome. Must it "then be, that his impure breath shall pollute "our families; that even under the shelter of "our roofs he shall come to destroy our do-"mestic happiness, present to us as an object "of ambition what should be the object of our "shame, and make us pant for what our ances-"tors held in abhorrence!—No; in solitude "will I pass my sorrowful life; I will witness "the fall of what I most respected, the death of "all I have cherished; without wife, without "children, without hope, without country, I "will languish till the day which shall call me "to the tomb of my ancestors."

"P. S. I shall depart two days later than I

" expected; but I shall travel with speed, in " order, if possible, to reach Noviliacum before " the matron of Chartres, whose intended ar- " rival has been announced to you. I intreat " you, for heaven's sake, try to gain a few " hours; arrange so that Julia Severa may not " depart before I see her; arrange so that " should the matron arrive previously she may " not find her at home, and thus snatch her from " my last look."

The courier, who had brought these despatches, had passed through Chartres, where he had seen Sulpitia, the wife of the president of the curia, who was to accompany Julia on her journey: he informed them that Sulpitia, regarding her visit to Noviliacum as an excellent opportunity for displaying her best attire and a sumptuous equipage, had not yet finished her preparations, and could not start so soon as Severus wished: she would not consequently be there before the expiration of two days. According to the calculation of Sylvia that was the very day Felix would arrive.

The two Roman ladies read with equal emotion the letters brought to them by the courier from Soissons. Julia, her heart overwhelmed by grief, her eyes swimming in tears, threw herself into Sylvia's arms, and gave her the letter

she had just received from her father. Sylvia, in turn, gave to Julia her son's letter, and in their sorrow the two friends had at least the consolation of keeping no secret from each other. One letter served to explain the other. Sylvia saw, as she had before suspected, that her son loved and was loved in return; she saw that her young friend viewed with horror the projected marriage with the king of the Franks; she saw that Julia desired an interview before she obeyed her father, as much as Felix did; and though she could not guess what projects they might form to save themselves from their threatened destiny, she saw that Julia had neither lost, nor was willing to lose, all hope. She felt that it belonged to her to teach the two young persons prudence; and notwithstanding the desire she had of seeing them united, she respected the paternal authority of Julius Severus; she dreaded the power and vengeance of the Frank king, whose dominion extended nearly to the gates of Noviliacum, and whose means of injury increased rapidly. Too well did she know that Clovis would never allow a senator of Gaul to carry off his chosen bride with impunity.

Sylvia endeavoured to tranquillize Julia by the tenderest embraces, by promises of unalterable friendship, and by the consideration of the good she might do to her fellow-citizens, to her

country, to all in distress. Clovis was young; it was said he united in himself all that was pleasing to the eye and flattering to ambition: was it not to be supposed he might possess sensibility also, that he might yield to the gentle influence of his wife, and cast aside the ferocity of the barbarian, considering himself the fellow-citizen of her whom he married? Was it not known that Placidia had entirely changed the disposition of Adolphus, and made of that Visigoth king the most zealous defender of the rights of the Roman empire, which at first he wished to overturn?

To all this Julia answered only by her tears; she pressed Sylvia in her arms, she shuddered at the name of Clovis, and shook her head with an expression shewing that her repugnance was still greater than her incredulity. Raising at length her eyes towards her friend,—"he asked to see me," said she. "O grant his request, allow me "to remain until I once more hear his voice— "let me not see the hateful Sulpitia before he "comes!"

Sylvia hesitated between the positive request of Felix, and the no less positive orders of Severus, to whom by the rights of hospitality she thought herself responsible. She wished, at least, to leave the decision to chance, and as Felix and Sulpitia would probably arrive the

same day, she expressed the propriety of awaiting the new orders which the matron might bring from Severus.

"No," exclaimed Julia, "let us arrange so "that she may not find me here; we will de- "part and continue our excursions in the "neighbourhood; we will visit the ruins of "Hesodunum, which for so long a time have "been the object of our curiosity. Eudoxus "and Martin shall stay here to receive Sul- "pitia; they will inform her that we shall re- "turn the same day; they will tell her that "this excursion has long been projected, and "thus, at least, will she find it impossible to "take me away the same evening."

Sylvia assented to this arrangement. According to their calculation Sulpitia would not arrive before the noon of the third day; the morrow could therefore be devoted to the repose they so much wanted; and should Felix make great speed he would probably precede Sulpitia and reach Noviliacum that day.

This, however, was contrary to Julia's plan. "Is there not," said she, "a direct road leading "from Chartres to Hesodunum?"

"Yes, the road branches off at a place five "leagues distant, and thence to Hesodunum is a "journey of five leagues."

" Felix, therefore might go to Hesodunum " and meet us before he arrives at Noviliacum?"

" Certainly, were he advised."

" And why, dear mother, should you not ad- " vise him?"

" In truth, I do not exactly see how I can " excuse myself in thus opposing the commands " of your father. Consider the ignorance of " slaves; think of their indiscretion, and judge " what your father would be justified in saying, " should any one of Sulpitia's suite see my mes- " senger and discover that I have sent to Felix " the information which I am bound to com- " municate to herself also."

" Dumnorix, my foster-brother, is still here; " in him I fear neither indiscretion nor want of " skill; he may take your note, and I hope you " will not refuse to write."

Sylvia consented; she wrote to her son, informing him at what hour they should be at Hesodunum, and inviting him to take that road, should he find it impossible to reach Noviliacum before their departure.

The two friends then retired to their apartments. But notwithstanding the fatigue of the journey, the watchings and terrors of the preceding night, Julia found not the sleep she so much wanted. Clovis, her father, and Felix,

presented themselves to her imagination by turns. Clovis, polluted with the Roman blood he had already shed and still thirsting for more, insulting her opinions, her feelings, her delicacy; uniting treachery to cruelty, and inspiring her with as much horror as the marriage vow must force her to pledge love to him. Severus, detained a prisoner at the barbarian's court, threatened with punishment for the disobedience of his daughter, accusing her of having sacrificed to a flitting passion, to caprice, the liberty, perhaps the life of her father. Felix, thrown into despair by the loss of her, seeing no longer any resource, forming no more projects, and expressing himself with that heartless despondency in which the letter to his mother was written.

In the midst of these cruel meditations, the vision of the preceding night, which till now she had been unable to comprehend, struck her as the light of prophecy. Two monks, two penitents, had offered her the garb of penance. She fancied she could still hear the words of him who addressed her:—*Julia Severa, in the name of all the saints who reign in heaven; in the name of St. Denis, of St. Germain, of St. Martin of Tours, arise;—quit the vain pomps of the world, renounce thy foolish hopes, take the garb*

of penance and follow us. The meaning of these words was now but too clear. It was, doubtless, St. Martin himself who had spoken to her; it was at his convent that he invited her to pass the rest of her days in penitence. *Quit the vain pomps of the world;*—this was Clovis and royalty: *renounce thy foolish hopes;*—this was Felix and domestic happiness: *arise and follow us;*—these words decided her fate.

Julia had been educated in the catholic faith, but under the inspection of her father, who remained secretly a pagan; for the priests, therefore, she felt more fear than love, for she had often experienced their enmity; the monastic life excited in her no feelings but those of disgust; she fancied she should in the convents find neither piety more enlightened nor morals more pure, than in the world, nor any satisfaction for her mind or her heart. To her the convent presented no other image than that of a perpetual prison: it was the punishment of the greatest criminals, reserved for the innocent by a false zeal, mistaken for religion. She dreaded the fate that hung over her; but was it possible for her to doubt that that fate awaited her? Was it not evident the convent was the only asylum which could save her from the pursuit of Clovis or the authority of her father?

Had not the convent been pointed out as her only refuge, by those celestial messengers who had appeared to her in so miraculous a manner, who had spoken to her with such a tone of authority, who had shewn themselves as corporeal beings, and whom she could not confound with the phantoms which tormented her imagination the same night?

Racked by these cruel reflections, Julia could not enjoy a moment's repose, and with gladness did she greet the first rays of the sun which gilded the domes of Noviliacum.

CHAP. XIV.

THE CELTIC RUINS.

ET QUIBUS IMMITIS PLACATUR SANGUINE DIRO
TEUTATES, HORRENSQUE FERIS ALTARIBUS HESUS;
ET TARANIS SCYTHICÆ NON MITIOR ARA DIANÆ;
* * * * * *
ET VOS BARBARICOS RITUS, MOREMQUE SINISTRUM
SACRORUM DRUIDÆ POSITIS REPETISTIS AB ARMIS.

Lucani Phar. Lib. i. *v.* 444.

And you, where Hesus' horrid altar stands,
Where dire Teutates human blood demands;
Where Taranis by wretches is obey'd,
And vies in slaughter with the Scythian maid:
* * * * * *
The Druids now, while arms are heard no more,
Old mysteries and barbarous rites restore. *Rowe.*

TWENTY-FOUR hours had elapsed since that sleepless night, and they had been passed in sorrowful perturbation. Sometimes Julia sunk into mournful despair, at others she recovered herself only to experience alternately the agitations of hope and fear. Felix, who on the opposite bank of the Loire had been her deliverer—Felix, who had shewn so much zeal in

her service—Felix, who loved her, who had asked her hand of her father, was about to arrive. Though his heart was bursting with grief, though he perhaps wished to see her only for the purpose of bidding her an eternal adieu, yet it was not impossible he might have formed some project for the safety of both. Could she know what unforeseen expedients he might yet point out? Could she think of him without expecting some assistance, and could it be possible that the day of his arrival should not be a day of happiness?

Felix having left Soissons on the sixteenth of October, could not reach Noviliacum on the seventeenth; on the morning therefore of the eighteenth, (fifteenth of the calends of November) Julia and Sylvia prepared to meet him at Hesodunum, whither Dumnorix was to conduct him. The priest Martin was commissioned to receive Sulpitia at Noviliacum; and Eudoxus was invited to accompany the two Roman ladies. This last was an excellent guide to the ruins, and his vast knowledge of ancient lore enabled him to answer all questions concerning those monuments of the political power and religion of the Celts.

The sun was already above the horizon, when Sylvia and Julia entered with Eudoxus into the

boat which was to take them to Hesodunum. Their passage down the stream of the Loire was easy; but as on their return they should be obliged to pull against the current, eight stout rowers were chosen to accompany them. The day was delightful; the clear and copious waters of the Loire rolled unagitated; gliding without resistance over a fine bed of sand, their surface was hardly disturbed by the rapidity of their motion; like a moving mirror they reflected all the objects standing on the delightful banks, and the charming headlands which the bark doubled in succession. Some habitations were scattered on the two banks of the river, where culture was less neglected than in the interior of the country; and on the left border were seen the white and regularly-built cottages of the legionary camp, giving to the slope an appearance of prosperity; but the numerous ruins which crowned the heights, proved that in former days a noble race had on the same spot shared the feast of nature, and enjoyed the advantages which a fertile soil, a happy climate, and an easy navigation offered to the inhabitants of the banks of the Loire.

Among the ruins those of Hesodunum were the most conspicuous, by their imposing mass,

the extent of space they covered, and the loftiness of the rugged rock which the labours of the Carnuti had changed to a fort. Often had they from those walls dared the efforts of the Turones and the Cenomani; often around their consecrated precinct had the Druids led the procession of human victims, whose blood was to flow on the altar of the fierce Hesus, the deity of the Gauls, whose name the town bore. Now the green brambles had taken root in the crevices of the walls and hung over the precipices: while among the ancient habitations of men were seen thick tufts of trees, occasionally crowning the mouldering towers.

However when the travellers approached, when they landed on the pier of the ancient town, melancholy impressions were mingled with their admiration of so picturesque a site. A long succession of generations had passed over that land; but the last had now ended, and the city was become the realm of silence and death. The walls which from the top of the hill descended to the river, and which connected the massy towers of the citadel with the pier on the Loire, were composed of enormous fragments of rocks, skilfully placed over each other without cement; they had often resisted numerous assailants by their strength; but now they

were split in many places, and opened to view the monuments of the ancient superstition of the Druids, the intent of which was already forgotten. The spectator saw circles of colossal stones which seemed the seats of giants assembled in council, with one stone more elevated than the other for their chieftain; altars, where an enormous rock was placed athwart two others with so scrupulous an attention to equilibrium that the hand could easily shake the mass, though it had already stood many centuries and was destined to stand many more.

The citadel commanding all the ruins, was composed of five enormous towers in the shape of a Greek cross, the most lofty and massive of which stood in the centre, and was connected with the four others by strong curtains. These round towers, surmounted by an elegant cornice, and built nearly after the model of the tomb of Cecilia Metella near Rome, were entirely covered with hewn stone and marble. They did not belong to the Celts, but to the earliest period of Roman dominion in Gaul, having taken the place of more ancient buildings, whose form was now forgotten. Between these towers and the river, on the steep of the hill was erected the city of Hesodunum. The site of the ancient palaces of the Gallic lords, of which few vestiges

could be traced, was now occupied by small low huts, formerly inhabited by artificers, fishermen and peasants. They had no pretensions to architectural beauty or elegance, but they were built on a line, and the streets had the appearance of neatness. All the doors were closed, and through some of the windows were seen the mouldering beams of the roof, and different stories falling on each other with the accumulated ruin and desolation which had succeeded to the dwellings of man.

Eudoxus taught his two companions to distinguish the Roman buildings from those of the Celts, those which belonged to the Druidical worship, and those which were destined for political or military purposes. He described the religious ceremonies which every year summoned the pontiffs of the Carnuti to Hesodunum; he explained the important events in the history of Gaul which were attached to the recollection of this fortress: but the whole of this learned dissertation has not reached our days, any more than the ruins which formed its subject; for even the name of Hesodunum is no longer found in any history or in any chart.

Julia heard this display of erudition with distracted attention: amid these ruins she sought only the path which led to the loftiest tower; she ascended to the platform built at the top,

and there she sat in the shade of a wild fig-tree which sprung from the wall; and there, having inquired which was the road to Chartres, she fixed her eyes in that direction, while Sylvia and Eudoxus vainly strove in turn to attract her attention, sometimes towards the majestic course of the Loire, which the eye could follow to a great distance; sometimes to the blue mountains which bounded the horizon, at others to the romantic effect of the ruins where the hand of nature, by the force of vegetation, was gradually destroying the labour of man. At length what she expected with so much impatience, what her eyes sought with so much anxiety, appeared in the distance; she discerned on the road from Chartres three horsemen approaching at full speed. Soon she fancied she could distinguish they were Dumnorix, Diocles and Felix. Therest of the suite of Felix had taken the road to Noviliacum. When Eudoxus saw them he fastened a white veil to a staff, and shaking it in the air like a banner, attracted the attention of the horsemen, and thus pointed out the spot where their friends expected them. In a short time Felix arrived at the gate of the citadel; he ascends;—he stands on the platform by the side of Julia and his mother.

Julia arose and offered her hand to Felix, with a countenance shining with joy. Felix

prostrated himself at her feet, and in a transport of rapture covered her hand with kisses; but Julia instantly threw herself into the arms of Sylvia, and concealing her head in the bosom of her friend, her grief burst in loud sobs.

Felix still held her hand—he could not mistake the cause either of her joy or her grief. Julia loved him;—she had never sought to conceal it; she had never hidden from him the secret of her heart, either by the artifice of the coquet or the reserve of the prude. She loved him; his return had transported her with pleasure; but the idea that she was on the point of losing him, the idea that this interview was the last, soon caused the most heart-rending grief to succeed the first emotions of joy.

As soon as she began to stifle her sobs, Sylvia replaced her gently on her seat, took Eudoxus by the arm and walked to some distance; while the pedagogue, struck with what he had just witnessed, endeavoured to prove by classical quotations, that joy sometimes bursts forth in tears, while grief vents itself in fits of laughter; so that according to the authority of the greatest poets and their best commentators, it would be impossible to decide on the feeling Julia had manifested by the signs both of pleasure and affliction.

Felix, covering with his kisses the hand which Julia did not withdraw, answered to the thoughts she had in her heart, but could not express. He told her, that he loved her passionately; that he loved her as he never before had loved, as he never could love again; that he found no happiness, no hope, but in her; that being once more united to her, no force could now sever them, no fear could ever cause them to renounce a happiness that depended upon themselves alone! "We are "still free," said he, "why should we bow "to another's will? Why should I renounce "all felicity, all hope through life, when my "sacrifice would only serve to render your "fate more cruel? Why should I abandon "you to a barbarian, incapable of appreciating "your worth, incapable of loving you; who, "should he not himself sacrifice you to brutal "jealousy or inconstancy, will, at least, compel "you to share the chances that threaten his own "life, ever exposed to the poniard of the as-"sassin, or the axe of the executioner?"

Julia raised her eyes, and looked on him with an ineffable mixture of tenderness and grief. "Yes," said she, "I love you—I love you as "you love me, but nevertheless all hope is "withered in my heart. This day is the last

" day of happiness I can expect in this life; " henceforth I must yield to my destiny; with " that destiny it is useless for me to contend; it " is swayed by a power that mocks the will of " man, and disposes of my life by supernatural " means. I can neither comprehend my fate, " nor the ways by which I am warned of it; " but around me, before me, every where, I see " nought but terror, save in you alone. Hell, " from the mouth of Lamia, has bid my father " unite me to Clovis; heaven, by one of its " saints, has commanded me to prepare for the " horrid incarceration of a convent: say Felix, " remains there one solitary hope?

" Yes," he replied, " some hope yet remains; " nay, certainty remains, if we trust our own re- " sources, our own courage, instead of listening " to oracles, whose falsity is proved by their " contradictions. Clovis as yet rules but in a " small part of Gaul; here he commands not, " and we may shelter ourselves from his vio- " lence. We may ask an asylum of the king of " the Visigoths, or of the king of the Burgun- " dians, without quitting our native land. We " can pass into Italy, where, acknowledged by " the emperor of the East, the wise and vir- " tuous Theodoric will soon become master of " Odoacer, who is now besieged, and, under the

" protection of his Ostrogoths, will restore to the " Roman senate its ancient authority. We can " find safety and liberty in the islets of Venetia, " where the laws of Rome are still acknow- " ledged, while arbitrary authority is abolished. " Or, lastly, we can seek protection from the " emperor of Constantinople; he once received " my father hospitably, and honoured him with " his confidence, he surely will not reject us. The " estates we abandon here do not constitute my " whole fortune; and, though in more strait- " ened circumstances, we may yet live far from " Gaul without knowing poverty."

" Ah! it is not poverty," replied Julia, " it is " not sorrow that I fear with you. But are we " to think for ourselves alone? Will not the " resolution we shall take decide the fate of " those we hold most dear? Hearken to me, " Felix! I appeal to your probity, to your " honour. Reply to me with frankness. You " have seen at Soissons both my father and " Clovis; you know on what terms they are " together, you can judge of the character of " the barbarian. Will you affirm that Julius " Severus runs no danger of losing life or li- " berty, should Clovis hear that, by giving to " you my hand, I have withdrawn myself from " his will?"

Felix was silent for some moments; he hesitated, but at length replied—" I will send privately a faithful slave to inform Julius Severus " of our flight, in order that he may place " himself in safety."

" When we determine our fate according to " the impulse of our passions, are we justified " in disposing also of another's destiny? Can I " deprive my father of his whole fortune? He " is now the confidential minister of a powerful " prince; can I, to gratify my own desires, force " him to become a fugitive and an outlaw?"

Felix fixed his eyes on the ground, and was silent.

" Should we abandon this country, what will " become of your mother? Will you drag her " with us into exile, far from her property, her " habits of life and the objects of her affection? " Will you quit her in her declining age? Will " you bereave her of a son, in whom she had " fondly centred all her hopes of happiness?"

Felix was still silent.

" Have you no duty to fulfil towards the " people who dwell on your large estates, towards seven hundred families of whom you " are the only protector, perhaps the only " patron? Now they enjoy existence, they " prosper, they multiply. But though they

"cannot share in your deliberations, though "they can have no influence on your coun- "sels, they will be made responsible for the de- "termination you are about to make. If, just "after negotiating with Clovis, you mortally "offend him, be assured that his Franks will "spread fire and destruction from the Cher to "the Loire, over all your patrimony; and then "hundreds of mothers will have to weep over "their slaughtered infants, because we could "not conquer our own passions."

Felix could resist no longer; his respiration was stifled, his eyes were filled with tears: at length he gave vent to his grief, and Julia, who, while speaking had kept her eyes fixed on the ground, heard him reply to her words by deep groans. She then raised her eyes, and seeing the tears rolling down his cheeks, she leant her head on his shoulder, and while he was pressing her to his bosom, she passed her arm round his neck, returned his embrace, and exclaimed, "Felix, "I love thee—I will love thee for ever!"

CHAP. XV.

A SEPARATION.

TALI QUÆ NUNC, UT CERNIS, HIATU
SUPPLICIIS INCLUSA TEROR : . . . .
QUOD SI NON OMNEM PEPULISTI PECTORE MATREM
. . . . HIS ORO MISERAM DEFENDE CAVERNIS
INQUE SUPERNA REFER.

Claudiani, de Raptu Proserpinæ, lib. iii.

Who now imprisoned as thou seest, in this abyss, am wracked with torment : . . . . Ah! if thou hast not driven the mother from thy bosom, rescue, I pray thee, me *thine* unhappy *child* from these caverns, and bring me back to earth.

THIS tender avowal, elicited by a feeling of mutual sorrow; this first spontaneous embrace, given when their souls were sunk in despair, changed not the situation of the two lovers, nor their future prospects. Sylvia joined them, having sent Eudoxus with a message to the boatmen. She endeavoured, in her turn, to raise their hopes and give them consolation. Felix and Julia had opened their hearts to her without reserve; there was not a secret thought, nor apprehension, that was not equally known to

all the three; not one private vow made by the one that was not shared by the two others.

Sylvia, considering the different projects of her son, and of her whom she loved to call daughter, endeavoured to give a more tranquil tone to their discussion, to remove all exaggeration both from their hopes and their fears, to guard them equally against imposing on themselves duties too austere, and against the temptation to neglect those they were bound to fulfil. But the more they thought of their situation, the more they found themselves surrounded by obstacles; the more perfectly did they feel convinced that the calamities of their country strongly embittered individual misfortune.

An immediate marriage of Felix with Julia, and a flight together, in order to escape the authority of Julius Severus, and the vengeance of Clovis, appeared to all equally opposed to duty and prudence. But were there no means of gaining time? Might it not be expected that by multiplying the indirect obstacles to this dreaded union, they would be seconded by unforeseen events—by the inconstancy of Clovis himself, or by the success of some one of the factions, who had fixed on another spouse for him?

Sylvia proposed to Julia to retire for some time to a convent, to allege a vow, a pilgrimage,

or some one of those numerous motives of devotion to which in those times all other things were made to yield; which daily served to cloke worldly designs, and which the most powerful were compelled, by the authority of the whole ecclesiastical body, to respect. Julia could not turn her thoughts, without shuddering, on that garb of penance which had been presented to her in a vision, and which seemed to announce for her an eternal engagement. But she had another reason for not putting trust in this expedient,—neither Severus nor Clovis was a Christian, and it was not probable they would respect in that religion an engagement so contrary to their views. They would perhaps force her from the convent she had chosen as an asylum, and then to danger would be added infamy.

It might be more easy to feign sickness or an accident to prolong her stay at Noviliacum, and in contemplating the surrounding ruins, Julia invoked them, as it were, to fall on her head. With what joy would she have purchased, even at the expense of a grievous accident, the certainty of passing another month under the same roof with Felix! With what a longing eye did she contemplate, as she walked on the edge of the platform, the depths below! With what in-

trepidity did she choose the most dangerous passages, in the secret hope her foot might slip, and enable her, in conscience, and without artifice, to dispense with obedience to her father's orders.

The two lovers decided on the expedient of a feigned indisposition, hoping thus to gain a few days at least. Meanwhile they flattered themselves some new event might occur; they reckoned on fortune and all the chances of futurity; they trusted to the vague feeling of hope, which lay at the bottom of their hearts, and for which they were indebted to love, to youth, and principally to the pleasure of seeing each other after what they called a long absence.

Cold viands and some wine had been brought from Noviliacum; Eudoxus took care to arrange the repast, and to spread it on the platform, where they at first met, and whence they commanded a most extensive prospect. Julia no longer refused to admire the beauty of the landscape; she directed her eyes towards the distant objects pointed out to her, and listened to the dissertations and anecdotes of Eudoxus: all that she saw, Felix saw also; all that excited any sensation in her, excited a corresponding sensation in the heart of Felix. He was questioned about all he had seen, all he had done at Sois-

sons; Julia and Sylvia, in their turn, told the history of their solitude, described their excursion to the banks of the Cher, the terrors they had experienced in the castle of Rutilianus, and Julia related her extraordinary vision. While she was speaking, Felix appeared to devour her lightest words; he was jealous of the breathing of the winds, the buzzing of the insects, the slightest noise which caused him to lose even one of the gentlest inflexions of her harmonious voice.

A happy confidence, a hope, the motives of which they could not explain, had sprung up in the hearts of both. This day, beyond which they saw no futurity, had passed with them a day of happiness; and though they had not succeeded in deciding upon one single project truly rational, they could not bring themselves to believe that such ecstatic bliss would ever end. The approaching sun-set, however, warned them to return. The rowers called them to the boat, while Diocles held the horse of Felix, who was to return by land, in order that the suspicion of Sulpitia might not be excited, for they expected to find her at Noviliacum. The moment was come when they were to bid farewell to the ruins of Hesodunum, and with aching hearts the two lovers descended from the platform.

In the direction of the Loire, the citadel communicated with the town beneath by a subterraneous vault, hewn in the living rock. This work was anterior to the Roman buildings, and belonged to the ancient Celtic fortress, the site of which was occupied by the towers of Augustus. A wide spiral staircase led to the centre of the largest tower, and opened on one of the extremities of the vault, which, passing under the ruins of part of the town, had its other opening at a small distance above the port, where their pinnace was waiting. By this vault, a remarkable monument of the power and perseverance of the ancient Carnuti, our travellers intended to regain the strand. Sylvia gave her arm to Eudoxus, and Julia walked slowly behind with Felix. Both had a secret foreboding that this, perhaps, was their last uncontrolled interview, that they soon would be observed, mistrustfully watched, and perhaps separated for ever. They involuntarily stopped, thinking they never could say all they wished to each other; they forcibly clung to these last moments of happiness, which were so soon to be ravished from them. Although Sylvia walked slowly, she was already at a considerable distance before them. At different times she had turned to hasten their steps. When arrived at

the opening of the vault she turned back for the last time to call them; what was her astonishment, her horror, when she saw the long cavern closed behind her!

She ran with Eudoxus towards the obstacle which interrupted her sight; it was not a gate, but an enormous mass of rock, which, wheeling on a pivot by means of invisible springs, opened or closed the cavern, according as it was turned to the side or the front, and fitted so closely into the opening that the eye could not distinguish it from the solid mass of which it seemed a part. This rock could be moved in the interior with so much facility by those who knew its secret springs, that Sylvia had not even heard the noise it made in closing. But, destined in the time of the Celts to secure their fortress, it offered an insurmountable resistance to those who wished to push it back to its former position, so that in the different sieges Hesodunum had stood, the efforts of the enemy had never been able to force it.

Sylvia and Eudoxus called with all their might, requesting Felix to explain this strange accident, and tell them what assistance they could give him; but no voice, no sound, could pierce the thickness of the rock; no answer

could be heard. They, however, supposed that Felix and Julia, seeing the vault closed, would return and soon make their appearance at the upper gate of the castle. The boatmen, who had assembled at the shrieks of Sylvia, advanced towards that gate to meet them: they hurried on with vague feelings of anxiety, while Sylvia remained on the spot whence she had just seen her children disappear, and where she still hoped soon to hear their voice, and learn what she should do for their assistance.

The boatmen made great speed, but the expectation of their return was to Sylvia a never-ending delay. She leant her ear to the rock, then advanced towards the extremity of the pier, whence she could see the upper gate of the castle; but meanwhile she left Eudoxus listening, in order that the slightest sound uttered in the depths of the cavern might not escape them.

At length the boatmen reappeared; they were speaking in an agitated manner with Dumnorix and Diocles, who were returning in their company; the paleness of the two latter, and the horror imprinted on their countenances, announced to Sylvia that none of the fears she had conceived were exaggerated.

"The upper opening of the vault is also "closed," said Diocles; "we have seen neither "Felix nor Julia."

At the same time he approached the rock, examined it with attention, took in his hand a link, which one of the boatmen had just lighted, directed the flame against all the points where the rock and cavern were joined; then, shaking his head, laid the torch on the ground: "there "is not a crevice," said he, "in which to thrust "a lever; we might overturn the mountain "sooner than shake this rock!"

"And the upper gate," said Sylvia, with increasing anxiety—

"That is also fastened in the inside by a rock. "It is not the first time I have seen the gates of "the Druids. At the siege of Autun we at-"tacked a party who had taken refuge in just "such a vault: the unfortunate wretches would "not open it, or perhaps were not able to do so "when they wished: they preferred perishing "with hunger to yielding. At the end of a "week, when our miners gained an entrance "into the vault they found them all dead."

"Good heavens!" cried Sylvia, with horror, "is it possible the gates closed by accident?"

"I think not—at least, they would not both "have closed at the same time."

" Who then can have shut them?"

" Some one, I suppose, who was watching " you in the guard-rooms, which probably are " hewn in the rock above these fatal gates."

They now sought some traces of this supposed ambush; they interrogated all the attendants of the travellers, eight boatmen and four or five servants. Diocles and Dumnorix had passed nearly the whole day in the ruins of Hesodunum. Neither of them had seen a living soul, neither of them had even observed the recent footsteps of man.

But Dumnorix had formerly fed his flocks in the neighbourhood of these ruins, and during the heat of mid-day had more than once sought shelter in the caverns. He said he distinctly remembered that the vaults did not consist of one single straight avenue; but had several branches forming a sort of labyrinth in these catacombs. He moreover asserted that he had seen them at times both open and shut, and that in the very place where on one day nothing was to be found but a solid rock, on the following might be seen an opening leading to a great distance, sometimes even to the bank of the Loire.

" These vaults," said he, " are the only re- " maining temple consecrated to our ancient di " vinities, and now that the Roman laws do no

" permit the Druids to keep guard around the
" caverns of Hesus and Taranes, the gods them-
" selves open and shut the gates according to
" their own good pleasure."

" Say rather," replied Diocles, " that they are
" opened and shut by men who profit by the
" dread the name of the Druids still inspires."

" In God's name," said Sylvia, " into whose
" hands can my son have fallen ?"

" These caverns probably serve as a refuge for
" the *bagaudæ,* or some fugitive slaves," replied Diocles.

" What can they have to demand of my
" son ?"

" Either revenge or ransom."

The first part of this alternative was the most terrific; the boatmen and the attendants who accompanied Sylvia, were immediately questioned, in order to ascertain whether any one of the slaves in the different establishments of Interamnes was missing; whether any had expressed resentment against Felix, or whether they could be imagined capable of such atrocious revenge. All their answers were tranquillizing, all united in the praise of Felix, and all declared their devotion to his service. These declarations, which appeared sincere, removed from Sylvia the two most dreadful apprehensions which had taken

possession of her mind: either that the gates had closed of themselves, and thus the lovers would be exposed to perish by hunger and misery in those subterraneous passages; or, that they had fallen into the hands of merciless foes, who, perhaps, at that very moment were shedding their blood. If they had been seized by robbers, it was to be supposed a high price would be named for their ransom, and for that very reason their lives would be spared and care taken of their persons.

Sylvia again sent her boatmen and slaves in different directions, ordering them to examine all the ruins, to seek on all sides, either another issue from the cavern, or some aperture, of which it was probable there were many to admit air and light into the vault. She earnestly desired them, if they should have the good luck to meet one of the *bagaudæ*, who she suspected had carried off her son, to refrain from violence towards him, and to make use of no threats; but to tell him that Sylvia was prepared to pay his troop the ransom of her son, and to give up all pursuit of the party: that consequently it was to their advantage as well as to her own, that the captives should be immediately liberated. Sylvia's messengers were desired to sound these promises down the vault,

should they discover any opening that appeared to communicate with the catacombs.

Sylvia and Eudoxus were again left alone at the mouth of the cavern. Sylvia sitting on a block of stone, and leaning her head upon her knees, was mournfully silent—sometimes she raised her haggard eyes, and turned them towards the cavern, the boat, the Loire; then, again she struck her head with violence against her knees, uttering shrieks of sorrow; sometimes her whole frame seemed to tremble, and then the perspiration hung in large drops on her forehead; she returned no answer to Eudoxus, who alternately strove to console her or to raise her hopes, and endeavoured to persuade her to remove from so dangerous a spot. "Is it not "possible," said he, "that the *bagaudæ* may "discover we are alone, may rush upon us, and "carry us off also, and then who would rescue "us from their hands, who would remain to pay "the ransom of your son?"

After a long search Dumnorix reported that he thought he had discovered two other gates to the cavern; but they were also closed, and judging from the brambles which overhung the passage, there was reason to believe they had not for a long time been opened. The others had found several apertures communicating with the

interior of the mountain, and which evidently admitted light into those dreary abodes, but they were so formed as to render it impossible to enter by them. In vain had they called and listened, no sound proceeded thence.

Diocles at length discovered an opening, which, according to its position, he imagined must correspond with the guard-room above the interior gate, or with the place whence the rock had been turned to cut off all communication between the vault and the tower. He had approached it without making any noise, and listened for some time. He was almost certain he had heard human voices in the interior, and he thought he could affirm they spoke Latin, and none of the barbarous dialects of Gaul. But when he called and pronounced distinctly the offers of Sylvia, all was deeply silent in the vault, and no answer was returned.

After hearing the relation of Diocles, Sylvia arose. " Bring," said she," from the camp of " the legionaries, all the workmen that can be " collected; bid them provide themselves with " the tools necessary for opening a mine; then " let an express be instantly sent to Noviliacum " to fetch thence all the labourers that can be " assembled. For my part no earthly power " shall tear me from this spot; here will I pass

" the night; here will I pass the day of to-
" morrow; never will I lose sight of this
" rock, until the pickaxe and chisel shall have
" opened a passage, and enabled me to enter
" the cavern." Having thus spoken she resumed her seat, and wrapt her head in her veil, and as it was impossible to induce her to say another word, Diocles undertook to execute her orders and to despatch to the camp of the legionaries and to Noviliacum, the proper expresses in a letter written on the tablets of Eudoxus.

END OF VOL. I.


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